# Police car drives the wrong way down new Great Yarmouth bus lane amid signage confusion



In a recent incident in Great Yarmouth, a video captured a police car driving in the wrong direction down a bus lane, causing a stir among local residents. Taken on May 19, the same day a new traffic flow system was introduced, the footage shows the police vehicle navigating Regent Road, which had just undergone significant changes in traffic management. This change led to a number of drivers inadvertently travelling the wrong way, raising questions about the clarity of road signage and communication during the transition.

Observed moving from the pedestrian crossover at Market Gates, the police car drove up the newly allocated bus lane towards a retail outlet, Poundstretcher. Under usual circumstances, bus lanes are designated for the use of buses, taxis, and emergency vehicles, which highlights why police vehicles can typically use such lanes. However, in this case, the police car did not appear to be engaged in an emergency response, as there were no flashing lights or sirens activated, prompting discussions about the appropriateness of its actions.

The situation echoes previous incidents where police officers were scrutinised for driving against traffic regulations. Notably, a Police Ombudsman investigation affirmed that a police officer was justified in a similar situation when responding to an emergency, where the use of blue lights allowed them to navigate against the flow of traffic swiftly and safely. The officer's decision was deemed reasonable given the circumstances, reinforcing that timely responses to emergencies are sometimes paramount, even when they involve bending the rules of the road.

In contrast, another case highlighted the rigidity of enforcement in bus lane regulations. A man faced a £195 fine after briefly entering a bus lane to allow an emergency police van to pass, illustrating the strict adherence to traffic laws regardless of the context. Local councils frequently enforce these regulations to maintain order and safety, resulting in a delicate balance between supporting emergency services and adhering to set traffic laws.

The UK government's guidelines on traffic management stress the necessity for local authorities to ensure clear signage and communication regarding bus lane restrictions. When motorists are unaware of the current rules, as seen during the recent changes in Great Yarmouth, confusion is likely to arise, leading to potential infractions. The Highway Code further substantiates that drivers must remain vigilant of the operational hours for bus lanes, as entering them without permission can result in fines ranging from £60 to £130, depending on the locality.

Ultimately, the incident in Great Yarmouth underscores the broader challenges of enforcing traffic regulations while ensuring that emergency services can operate effectively. As road systems evolve and change, both drivers and authorities must navigate the complexities of compliance and emergency responsiveness, striving for clarity to prevent confusion and ensure community safety.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25180186.police-car-great-yarmouth-drives-wrong-way-bus-lane/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-enforcement-outside-london/traffic-management-act-2004-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-outside-london-on-civil-enforcement-of-bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-contravention)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25180186.police-car-great-yarmouth-drives-wrong-way-bus-lane/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.blackcircles.com/news/driving-in-a-bus-lane-uk-guide)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.policeombudsman.org/news/officer-was-justified-in-driving-on-wrong-side-of-the-road-during-emergency-response), [[3]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/man-fined-195-pulling-london-26021204)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/general-rules-techniques-and-advice-for-all-drivers-and-riders-103-to-158), [[7]](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/enforcement-bus-lanes-and-bus-only-streets)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.blackcircles.com/news/driving-in-a-bus-lane-uk-guide), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-enforcement-outside-london/traffic-management-act-2004-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-outside-london-on-civil-enforcement-of-bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-contravention)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25180186.police-car-great-yarmouth-drives-wrong-way-bus-lane/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.policeombudsman.org/news/officer-was-justified-in-driving-on-wrong-side-of-the-road-during-emergency-response> - An investigation by the Police Ombudsman concluded that a police driver was justified in driving on the wrong side of the road during an emergency response. The officer had activated blue lights and drove against the flow of traffic to reach an emergency, averaging just under 23 mph with a maximum speed of 27.4 mph. The investigation found that the officer's actions were reasonable given the circumstances, as a delay could have resulted in further crimes being committed and decreased the chances of capturing suspects.
3. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/man-fined-195-pulling-london-26021204> - A man was fined £195 for momentarily pulling into a bus lane to allow an emergency police van to pass. Despite his appeal, Waltham Forest Council insisted on the fine. The incident occurred when the police van was unable to overtake due to oncoming traffic, prompting the driver to move into the bus lane to facilitate the pass. The council rejected the appeal, emphasizing that drivers must adhere to bus lane regulations, even when yielding to emergency vehicles.
4. <https://www.blackcircles.com/news/driving-in-a-bus-lane-uk-guide> - This guide provides essential information on UK bus lanes, including types, rules, and fines. It explains that bus lanes are primarily reserved for buses, coaches, taxis, and emergency vehicles. The guide also details the fines for driving in a bus lane, which typically range from £60 to £130, depending on the city. It emphasizes the importance of understanding local bus lane regulations to avoid penalties and ensure safe driving.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-enforcement-outside-london/traffic-management-act-2004-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-outside-london-on-civil-enforcement-of-bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-contravention> - This government publication provides statutory guidance for local authorities outside London on the civil enforcement of bus lane and moving traffic contraventions. It outlines the importance of clear communication and signage to inform motorists about bus lane restrictions and enforcement. The document emphasizes that unclear restrictions can confuse drivers and undermine enforcement efforts, highlighting the need for consistent and visible signage to ensure compliance.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/general-rules-techniques-and-advice-for-all-drivers-and-riders-103-to-158> - The Highway Code outlines general rules, techniques, and advice for all drivers and riders. Rule 141 specifies that bus lanes are indicated by road markings and signs, and unless otherwise indicated, drivers should not drive in a bus lane during its period of operation. Rule 142 addresses high-occupancy vehicle lanes and other designated vehicle lanes, stating that drivers must not drive in such lanes during their times of operation unless signs indicate that their vehicle is permitted.
7. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/enforcement-bus-lanes-and-bus-only-streets> - This article from nidirect explains the enforcement of bus lanes and bus-only streets in Northern Ireland. It details when vehicles may enter a bus lane, such as to avoid an accident, with the direction or permission of a police officer in uniform, or to allow the vehicle to be used in an emergency by services like police, military, fire and rescue, or ambulance. The article also outlines the penalties for unauthorized use of bus lanes and the importance of adhering to bus lane regulations.