

Proposed Permissions for Overnight Parking in Scarborough Borough Council Area

Scarborough (and North Yorks) councils have, during my thirty years as a motorhomer, been historically hostile to motorhomers. I've seen the proposals to permit overnight parking in Whitby so I thought I'd like to give you some reasons why I think you should permit me, and motorhomers generally, to park overnight.

I thought I might do this by comparing SBC with a similar local authority in what has become my favourite country after my own – France. I spent part of my military service in North Yorks and I'd like to return there but you have been so unwelcoming that I've not visited the Scarborough area for many years. I found it difficult to make a comparison but I found it easier if I compared the larger N Yorks County Council area and I chose the French Department 64 – Pyrénées Atlantique. You'll be surprised; you're not all that different.

You both have great pride in your area – and I mean this nicely. You seem to be particularly proud to be Yorkshiremen, though with great humour, and I've liked that. Likewise, I was surprised to find the people of Pyrénées Atlantique celebrating Basque festivals! I'd thought of the Basque people as Spanish. No, the Basque people may well have many French among their numbers.

This is what the French Basque tourist authorities say about their area – hoping to attract tourists:

Ideally located between the ocean and mountains, Pyrénées-Atlantiques is ideal for lovers of nature as well as fans of outdoor activities and architecture enthusiasts, with a wide range of things to see and do. You'll find an extensive selection of attractions, from the beautiful villages of Béarn and Pays Basque to the splendid Pyrenean mountains, which are ideal for skiing and hiking, through the spa resorts with their health-giving water, the Cities of Art and History of [Bayonne](#) and Pau, and the seaside resorts of the Basque coast, with their long, sandy beaches.

And this is what your tourist office says:

From the grand sweeping hills and rich valleys of the world famous North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales to the charming market towns and picturesque villages of Thirsk, Northallerton, Easingwold, Great Ayton, Bedale and Stokesley, expect stunning scenery and a warm welcome to 'God's Own Country'.

Not all that different really. Perhaps the French are a bit more enthusiastic but why on earth do you not tell people about Scarborough and Whitby? You could have said something about seaside resorts. You do have some but, for some reason, you don't want the tourist to know about them – and, frankly, this ties in with the lack of

welcome you have extended to me and my motorhoming friends in the past.

I'm glad to see that this might be changing; that you now see the need, with the current impending economic catastrophe that it might be a good time to attract motorhomers and that the proposed aire at Whitby might be a godsend to N Yorks.

Let's compare a few statistics for Dept 64 – that is, Pyrenees Atlantique – with your own North Yorks. Not very many stats – just to see how the regions compare.

	North Yorks	Pyrenees Atlantiques
Population	814605	673068
Area Sq Km	8053	7645
Pop Density	76	88
Coastline miles	45	25
Aires	One	79

So, I think you'll agree. Apart from the coastline, you seem to be the same size area of authority, sort of: the same size population, about, and pretty well the same population density. The French area maybe a little more crowded. And, apart from coastal attractions, you seem to wish to attract the same sort of tourists. Where you differ enormously is that last row – Aires. And this is where your attitudes are worlds apart.

Aires is the word we use to describe permitted overnight parking places for motorhomes. What you are being asked to provide in Whitby.

So far as I've been able to find out ... the only overnight permitted parking place in North Yorks is in Helmsely. It is fortunate to be in the N Yorks council area and not too far from you that you can find out how successful their hospitality has been = or if it has turned out to be a disaster for the town. I confidently expect that the local council will tell you, proudly that it has been a success.

Ryedale council continue to advertise its motorhome overnighting site on its website and from the point of view of the public, the council and the motorhome community it seems to be a great success. Here's one comment from a motorhomer.

*“Some friends recommended this MH stop to us. Glad they did. Excellent stop over at a lovely North York’s market town with lovely walks etc. **It’s free overnight** and you just pay for parking during the day. Well done to the forward looking council. “*

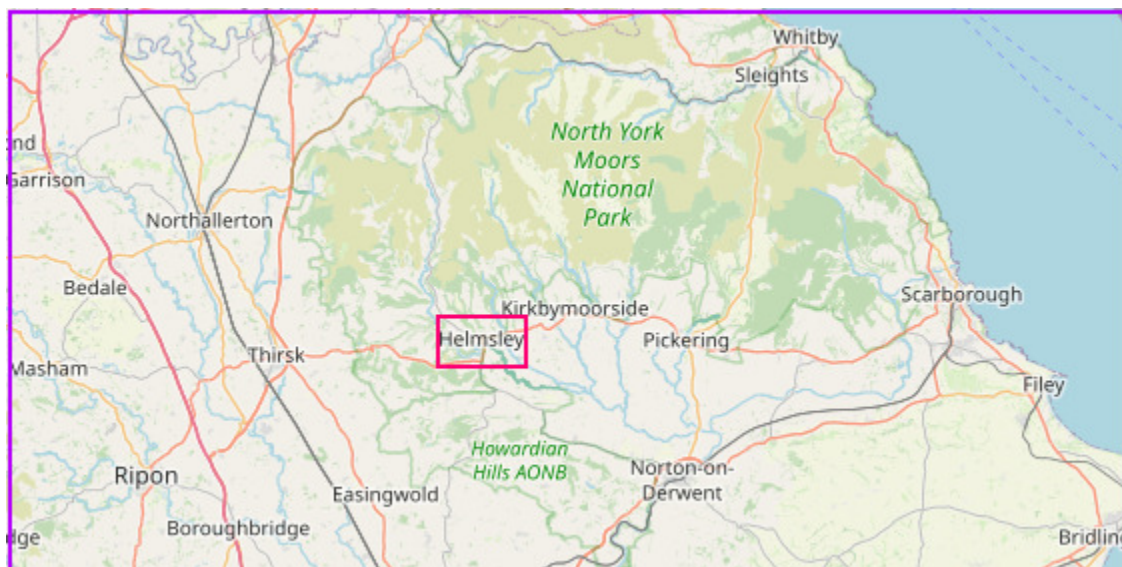
Forward looking council. We need more of them and I'm pleased that we might soon be able to count Scarborough Borough Council among them.

It would not be impossible for me to find figures to illustrate how much income is generated by the year round asset that motorhomers can be if attracted. It would not be impossible for me to find figures finding what it would cost to provide permitted places for motorhomers to park overnight but it will be much easier for your own tourist people to find this out and probably they already have figures for visitor footfall and spend?

What about cost to the council tax payer? It is sufficient for me to say that a proposed trial in Whitby need cost no more than the erection of a sign welcoming me to the proposed car park.

A vivid impression of how much we are valued by the Basque people would be a simple map showing how many overnight parking locations are provided and, luckily I can show you this.

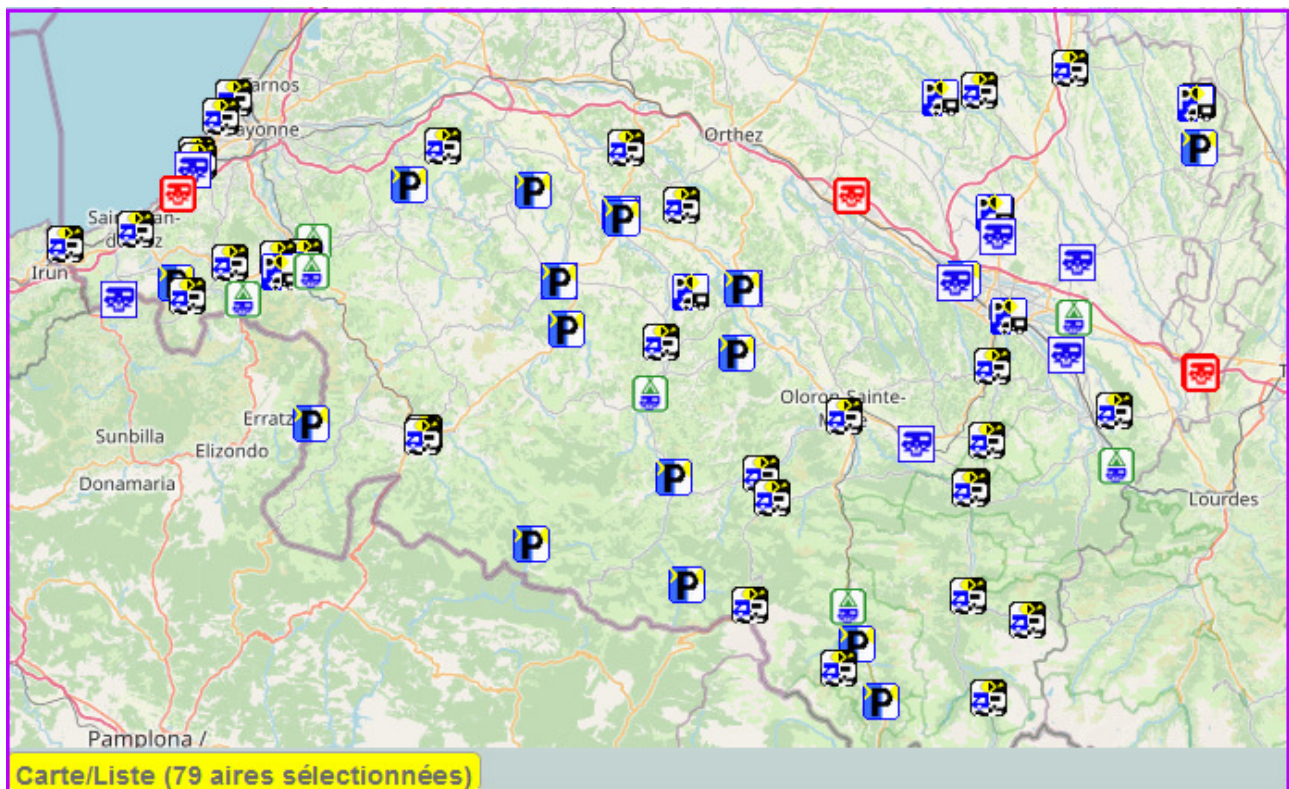
First, North Yorks. For comparison, **One** permitted overnight location.



I've not added locations of commercial camp sites though it might be possible to identify them because they do not fulfil the needs of motorhomers and my purpose is to talk about the viability of the Whitby proposals.

Then our French friends. Likewise, I've not included the commercially available alternatives – though there are many.

Seventy-nine permitted locations.



Seventy-nine. The proliferation shows the value placed upon them by the local councils, businesses and tax-payers.

Some of these aires are free of any charge though sometimes parking might be free but with a charge for fresh water. In very touristy and attractive areas – on the coast for example then there may well be a parking charge which may, or may not, include fresh water. A rough rule of thumb is – on the coast, a charge. Inland, free.

The local tax-payer in Pyrénées Atlantiques benefits tremendously from the income generated by motorhomers. Local authority there recognises this and provides a welcome. Why has your authority not done the same?

I'd like you to consider the proposals for Whitby and make them not just for the winter but permanent. It will be remarkably cost-free to begin a one or two year trial and monitor the results.