

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which the Cabinet Member may speak in response. The deputation will be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

(a) Deputation concerning the consultation on a residents' parking scheme for Canning Street – Ms. Gail Findlay (Spokesperson)

A dangerous parking situation now exists on Canning Street, and we feel very strongly that the Council should respond to the expressed views of the significant majority of Canning Street residents and take the decision to restrict parking to one side of the Street only, and include Canning Street in the existing neighbouring Zone H area parking scheme.

As noted in paragraph 4.11 of item 45, we have already submitted a petition signed by 27 residents in the street, asking for us to be included in zone H, with parking restricted to one side of the street, and giving reasons behind the urgent need for this. The report you will be considering today on the 'Hanover and Elm Grove Resident Parking Scheme Review Community Consultation' confirms that a majority of residents of Canning Street have voted for a resident's parking scheme. From our own local research we expect that this will have been a 'healthy' majority. However, the report also recommends that parking controls are NOT introduced in Canning Street, due to the fact that a small majority of residents in the other Bakers Bottom streets are against any such controls and 'due to concerns about displacement into other roads in Bakers Bottom who would find themselves surrounded by parking schemes...'. 'Displacement' is the exact problem that residents of Canning Street are already experiencing and have done since the 2004 Council consultation failed to include Canning Street in the then new neighbouring parking controlled areas, this problem will continue to if we are not included in Zone H. On Canning Street cars park, bumper to bumper and many with 2 wheels on the pavement, on both sides of the street, leaving a very narrow, irregular, single lane for the 2 way traffic access. In addition to the Canning Street residents and their visitors seeking to park, it is also used as a free car park 24/7 by staff and visitors to the nearby hospital, Brighton College, and Metway recording studios, and also as a long term van park by people who we suspect live no where near Canning Street and who do not access their vehicles for months at a time. The latter, often oversized vehicles, further encroach on the limited access and exacerbate the 'Canning Street car park', rather than 'living street', environment.

We very much approve of the Council's policy of consultation with and engagement of residents about changes to their local environment. However, if it is the case that Canning Street should be bound by the opposing views of a small majority of residents in other streets, this seems to us illogical, unjust and counter to the new spirit of the 'Big Society'. The other streets in Bakers Bottom are all effectively 'no through' roads; they are also not so convenient as our street to the Hospital, Brighton College, etc. Consequently, the rest of the Bakers Bottom Streets do not experience the same level of disruption and frustration as Canning

Street in relation to parking. It seems to make a mockery of consultation, if residents are asked what they think about parking in their own street, but then all the streets in the area are treated en masse.

As it happens, as Canning Street is on the boundary of the existing parking Zone H, there is a relatively straightforward solution, as proposed in our petition, which would be to extend Zone H to include Canning Street. We have been checking unused capacity in Walpole Terrace and College Terrace (our neighbouring Streets in Zone H) frequently over the past two months, and calculate that there are at all times around 20 unused spaces in these two streets alone, which would also be available for Canning Street residents' (and indeed commuters) 'displaced' by extending resident only parking controls to Canning Street . The case for introducing residents' parking in Canning Street is, in our view, irrefutable and urgent. Residents have been contacting the Council about this even before the current consultation; see for instance extracts overleaf from Gail Findlay's harrowing letter to the Council and Emergency Services last November, about problems with an ambulance reaching her house following a very serious accident in the home that her daughter suffered. More recently, in May, a fire engine experienced difficulties in accessing the street and the property (45 Canning Street) of a frail elderly resident who suffered a house fire and significant trauma and smoke damage.

Extracts from letter of November 2009 to Mark Prior, B&H Council from Gail Findlay (41 Canning Street) re: Community Safety and Parking on Canning Street

I am greatly relieved that the Council has initiated a new review of the parking situation for Canning Street. I have lived at 41 Canning Street since 2000, am a car owner and I responded, in support of a resident parking scheme, to the 2004 Council consultation that failed to change the parking arrangements on Canning Street, and to a later, also unsuccessful, resident led consultation. The Canning Street environment and 'sense of place' is greatly damaged by the parking situation, but more importantly, it no longer feels to me like a safe place to live as I now have evidence that the safety of Canning Street residents is being put at serious risk by the problem of access for emergency vehicles:

On July 28th my daughter, who was visiting with her partner and my grandson, had a very serious accident in my house. She was carrying a bowl of food up my basement stairs, tripped at the top of the stairs and fell out through the back door. The bowl smashed and two long shards of china cut her right arm in two places. She cut a major artery, nerve and all the muscles in her forearm. Her partner (who is in the army and, thank goodness, is trained in battlefield first aid) administered first aid while we waited for the ambulance. The ambulance arrived at the Southerland Road end of Canning street very soon after and started to drive down the street, proceeding very slowly because of the very narrow and irregular gap left between the rows of vehicles parked, as ever, bumper to bumper, either side of Canning Street. About a quarter of the way down the street it got stuck between two of the parked vehicles and could not proceed further. The ambulance then had to reverse back along the street. This, of course, took ages because of the narrow and irregular gap that it had to manoeuvre through in reverse gear. I was watching out for the ambulance, standing on my front door step, holding my hysterical 2 year old grandson, who had witnessed his mother's accident - I watched this ambulance delay unfold from my front doorstep, while

my daughter, his mother, was potentially bleeding to death in my garden. I hope you can imagine how I felt.

Eventually the ambulance reached Sutherland Road where it backed out (another high risk manoeuvre that is frequently necessary for vehicles failing to access Canning Street, made even more risky by the speeds that many vehicles tend to reach travelling down the Sutherland Road hill) and then drove round College Terrace to park at the other end of Canning Street and then to carry their equipment to my house and to tend to my daughter. The problem with access delayed the paramedics by more than 5 minutes - it felt to me like 5 hours - but even 5 minutes could have meant the difference between life and death for someone with a severed artery who had not had someone at hand to give expert first aid. Fortunately my daughter did not bleed to death. She was in hospital for 3 days, had a major operation on her arm and has still not (and has been advised may never) regain full use of all her fingers of her right hand.

What would happen if one of the Victorian terraced houses in the middle of the street caught fire? Most are 3 or 4 stories high, which can draw house fires like chimneys extremely fast, and many still have working open fires, flammable 19th century floor and wall constructions and wooden floor boards. How would fire engines get close enough in time and position the necessary equipment to rescue trapped residents and save lives in the event of a fire? What would happen if a small child was injured on the road in the middle of the street? Some car drivers seem to view the street as a fun, high speed obstacle course. How would the ambulance reach them without delay? Since I arrived in 2000 a lot more families with young children now live on the street and our front doors open, pretty much, directly onto the pavement, bumper to bumper, half on the path, parked cars, making visibility between drivers and small pedestrians non-existent.

I do hope that my family's traumatic experience will inform the Council's decision to take action on this situation as a matter of urgency, to improve the Canning Street living environment significantly and, more importantly, to prevent a future tragedy.

(b) Deputation concerning the consultation on a residents' parking scheme for Queen's Park Rise – Ms. S Griffin (Spokesperson)

As residents of the upper part of Queens Park Rise, we strongly object to the Director of Environment's proposal to refuse our majority request for the upper part of Queens Park Rise to be included in a resident parking scheme, such as the Light Touch scheme in place at the lower half of our road. We respectfully urge the Council to uphold the democratic process of Community Consultation, and accept our majority request.

Linking of Queens Park Rise to Freshfield Street

We do not agree with the Director (see paragraph 4.12 of the Report) that Queens Park Rise cannot be considered in isolation from Freshfield Street. Rather, we argue that the upper part of Queens Park Rise, on which we live, should not be considered in isolation from the lower part of Queens Park Rise, which currently enjoys the benefit of the Area U Resident Parking Scheme.

When we were consulted, we were not informed that the results of our responses would be counted only as a combination of Queens Park Rise and Freshfield Street, and that residents of both streets would have to agree in their responses. This was not the basis on which we were consulted, and we feel it is an unfair and arbitrary decision to only look at our consultation responses as part of a grouping with Freshfield Street. Indeed, all the other results appear to have been counted on a road-by-road basis.

We consider it highly inappropriate and unusual to take a small road like Queens Park Rise and split it down the middle in terms of parking zones. We ask that Queens Park Rise is viewed in its entirety, and that the upper half should not be considered in isolation from the lower half.

Displacement to other roads

The Report states that officers are concerned that if upper Queens Park Rise were included in the Area U Resident Parking Scheme, this would increase displacement to surrounding roads and leave Freshfield Street surrounded by controlled parking.

We respond that displacement will largely be directly from St Lukes School, which is on the lower half of Queens Park Rise. **We take the view that if the upper part of the road is brought into the Area U scheme, this will directly reduce traffic.** We believe that many staff from St Lukes School and other commuters will choose alternative travel methods to get to work if they are not able to park their cars in Queens Park Rise all day.

With regard to Freshfield Street, we argue that the consultation results should be viewed on a road by road basis. Freshfield Street residents have voted not to have a parking scheme, but those residents' views about their road should not be allowed to have more weight than the views of Queens Park Rise residents. Otherwise the effect will be that Freshfield Street residents will have decided the fate of Queens Park Rise residents, which would be unfair and unjust.

We do not understand why we were asked what we thought about parking in our own road if Parking Officers are only treating our responses as part of a wider area. The consultation was supposed to be specific to our individual circumstances in each road.

We would like to reiterate that our request is unanimously supported by our local Queens Park Ward Councillors, who are aware of the difficulties and stress caused by the current split of the road in parking zone.

The Difficulties We Currently Face

Every day, we experience extreme difficulties in parking our cars on our road. It is a constant daily struggle to park our cars near to our homes. This has been the case for several years, and it is very wearing and stressful.

In the mornings the road fills up with commuters and staff who work at St Lukes School. Some of our residents are elderly but do not have disabled badges, and they have a real need to park close to their homes. Many of our residents are

families with young children, and find it very difficult to carry children, bags, infant car seats, shopping and other heavy items into their houses if they cannot park nearby. Some residents have to go out in their car early each morning but only for a short while. When they return, they will not be able to park in their own road for the rest of the day, until the school staff and commuters take their cars home in the evening.

We have many vehicles double parked in our part of the road as a result of these problems. **This causes a serious hazard especially for children.** Not just the numerous children who live in our locality but also for many school children who cross our part of the street going to and from school.

Some of our cars have been scraped and dented by commuter cars who try to park in tiny spaces. We have mechanics' garages who park their customer vehicles in our road for weeks at a time when they are not working on them. There are work vans left by owners for weeks at a time. There have been arguments and confrontations between residents and these other users of our road, and residents have been threatened and intimidated on occasion. There are instances where our vehicles have been blocked in by other road users so we could not use them. This is very distressing if for example, a resident has to go out in order to pick up young children at a certain time, or get to a hospital appointment.

We cannot continue with the problems as they currently are. We are not exaggerating when we say that the parking problems are affecting our quality of life, and our enjoyment (or the lack of) of our homes. There are some amongst us who have decided we will have to move away if there is no hope of improving the parking situation in the road, which is a real shame. Residents should not be driven away from the area because of the parking situation, and we are looking to the Council to help prevent this dire consequence.

Council now has the opportunity to resolve all of these parking difficulties for us by accepting the request we made when we were consulted, and we sincerely hope that you will have us in mind when you make the final decision.

