

## Minutes

**Petition Hearing - Cabinet Member for Environment**

**Wednesday, 20 January 2010**

**Meeting held at Committee Room 3a - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



**Published on: 5 February 2010**

**Come into effect on: 15 February 2010**

### **Members Present:**

Councillors Sandra Jenkins

### **1. GATED ACCESS BETWEEN EASTCOTE HOUSE GARDENS AND ST LAWRENCE DRIVE**

Councillor Bruce Baker attended the meeting and spoke as a Ward Councillor.

*Concerns and suggestions raised at the meeting included the following:*

- Petitioners gave a background on the access to the park. That during the summer months the park was used by youths to drink and socialise. That the area was also used as a cut through.
- The main car park by the snooker club was locked at night so that the only place to park if you wished to go into the parking in the evening was St Lawrence Drive.
- Youths had caused damage whilst walking driving along the road. For example: car roofs run over, car wing mirrors knocked off, houses having stones, missiles and dog excrement thrown at them; driveway lights kicked off.
- The gate seemed to be an evening meeting place for youths.
- Numerous complaints were made to the Council and Nicky Gill, Community Safety Team, visited the site.
- The Council Officer agreed with the residents that a possible solution would be a gate restricting access to the park and that she would recommend this to Green Spaces.
- The residents had not heard anything since. Therefore put a petition together.
- Petitioners noted that whilst officers' comments of anti-social behaviour showed that it had decreased more recently; that this was due to it being winter and anti-social behaviour usually peaked in the warmer months.
- Many elderly residents felt threatened by this anti-social behaviour.
- The lead petitioner wrote to those houses around the estate, not the whole estate.

- They received 3 objections to 290 from their circular around the estate on the proposed gate. Their concerns were access, lighting and how it would affect local art groups.
- There would still be access to the park when the gate is locked as there are other entrances to the park.
- Petitioners commented that other examples of locked gated access had shown a decrease in anti-social behaviour in the borough.
- Petitioners said that they could lock the gate, in the absence of a park ranger.
- A push button lock gate was the preferable type from those that presented the petition. That the code could be circulated to residents via the neighbourhood watch scheme.
- Until last year the original gate posts were still present and a gate could have been re-hung but they were changed for fencing. They were not consulted beforehand.
- Other residents sympathised with the criminal damage some residents had suffered.
- A number of other residents would suffer adversely if they do not have that route open.
- People from outside of the area use that park and would not have access to the code. For example, dog walkers, allotment holders, artists.
- Also be unreasonable that people who had come home from work later afternoon find the gate locked and would have to use another route home.

The Ward Councillor commented on the petition:

- The Ward Councillor spoke of the vandalism occurring regularly.
- In other areas where gates had been put up the conditions there had improved.
- The petitioners had around 5% of the residents signatures on the petition so there should be a consultation with the remaining and surrounding streets.
- The Ward Councillor questioned that would replacing the gate actually reduce the crime rate in the area as there are other routes into the park.
- Other measures to reduce crime would be required.
- Proposed that the Council carry out a consultation. That this was the best route in order to be fair to all residents.
- That the idea of an electronic lock is good but it could be misused.
- That a Safer Neighbourhood Officer should attend a resident meeting.

Councillor Sandra Jenkins listened to the concerns of the petitioners and responded to the points raised.

- The Cabinet member commented that the consultation should be a full consultation, and be done by the Council.
- That residents should keep informing the authorities of all criminal activity in the area.

Officers advised that:

- A questionnaire could be sent out by officers for consultation. These would include open questions.
- Residents would be given 4-6 weeks to get responses back to the Council. Then this would be analysed by officers.
- That the residents could discuss this at their next agm if they wished to do so.
- Residents could contact Damien Searle, Green Spaces Team, about any further incidents.
- Other aspects need to be looked to resolve the issues. For example with the police, park rangers and safer neighbourhood team.

## **DECISION**

**That the Cabinet Member**

- 1. Noted the petitioners request and discussed their concerns in detail.**
- 2. Noted the background to the request for the gate, as set out in the report.**
- 3. Asked officers to conduct a wide consultation of local residents and site users and report back to the Cabinet Member.**

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

To allow the Cabinet Member to understand fully the petitioners concerns and consider if it is justified at this stage to remove the posts or keep the situation under review.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Discussion with the petitioners could identify alternative options.