

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - WRITTEN RESPONSES

5.2 QUESTION FROM STEVE PINK ON BEHALF OF NORTHWOOD HILLS RESIDENTS SUPPORT TEAM (RST) ON PARKING, TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS

I attended the Council meeting in July 2008 at which the petition from 465 residents of Northwood Hills was presented asking for parking controls to deter all-day commuter parking. At that meeting, I made the point that Tolcarne Drive should be a special case for consideration in view of particular safety considerations caused by the combination of the Harlyn junior school and the Driving Test Centre both situated here.

Following that meeting and consideration of the petition, Council agreed to consult and a consultation exercise was carried out eventually 7 months later, in February 2009. It covered the roads around Northwood Hills station with a consultation of residents and a separate but simultaneous consultation of the shopkeepers in Joel St in respect of a "Stop & Shop" parking control scheme.

The shopkeepers gave a majority in favour of parking management, for primarily commercial reasons obviously as they believe commuter parking deters potential customers who want to park to come in to their shops. So the 'Stop & Shop' parking management scheme has been approved by Council as a priority for Northwood Hills and is now to be implemented. In that same consultation exercise, however, Tolcarne Drive residents also gave a majority in favour of parking management AND have followed that up with a formal request for parking management, primarily for road safety (not commercial) considerations, yet this request (sent in August 2009 and followed up in February 2010) has not had any response from the Council or from any of our local Ward Councillors who we would hope would support any such remedial action.

We are aware that individual roads have been, and are being, given parking management schemes all across the Borough. Tolcarne Drive clearly has safety issues different from other roads in this area because of the combination of the junior school AND the driving test centre.

We would hope that the Council can take action for this road and will at least respond to the major concerns raised by residents?

5.3 QUESTION FROM JOHN STONE OF TOLCARNE DRIVE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS

As a very long-term resident of Northwood Hills, having lived here for 40 years, I have written many times to the Council over the years asking for some action to stop commuter parking along our road Tolcarne Drive. Nothing has been done yet but I hope there will be some action following our residents group's campaign.

On many occasions, these regular commuters park in a way that goes over my dropped kerb and stops me getting my car easily out of my drive. Your traffic wardens do a good job when I phone them and they come and put tickets on the cars. But those cars are parked all day for the station, so it doesn't help me getting in and out my drive during the day as the drivers don't come back till early evening to go home. I know this affects other houses near me and that other people also have to contact your traffic wardens to get cars ticketed. Can you please take a look and let me know how many tickets are issued here each year compared with previous years?

In the past two years I have noticed a big increase in the cars parking here every day and it now goes all the way up and beyond the junction with Harlyn Drive. That makes things more

dangerous for all of us but especially for the people going to and from Harlyn School. We see and hear many near-misses as cars and motorbikes swerve to get round each other when there is almost no room to pass, so we hope the Council appreciates the real safety concerns going on here.

I hope the Council is going to recognise what the residents are asking for and put something in here that will make a difference and improve safety. I was pleased that the Council did eventually do a consultation in 2009 and we know that in this road there was a majority vote wanting some parking management scheme.

Response to both:

Councillor Burrows thanked both residents for their questions. As public questions 5.2 and 5.3 raise broadly the same issues, Councillor Burrows answered them together.

Councillor Burrows knew that parking in Northwood Hills had long been a concern to many residents, and indeed the Council always aimed to work closely with the community to try to tackle the problems with a solution that gained the majority support.

Councillor Burrows was pleased that residents had a positive experience of their ability to register their dropped kerbs for enforcement against inconsiderate parking. However, Councillor Burrows realised that this might only be a partial solution for these residents and their neighbours. With regard to the number parking tickets issued in Tolcarne Drive in 2008/09, it was noted that 53 tickets had been issued. In 2009/10, 67 tickets had been issued.

One of the dilemmas faced by the Council was that any parking management scheme which set out to tackle only part of a problem would almost inevitably end up causing problems for neighbouring roads - parking problems would simply move from one place to another. For obvious reasons, while the Council wanted to achieve the best overall position for all residents, it would be self-defeating if, by curing the problem for one group of people, the Council made life worse for their neighbours – furthermore, commuters were adept at finding new places to park. It was therefore very rare that the Council would introduce a parking management scheme in just one road. On many occasions, Councillor Burrows had considered petitions from residents living at the edge of a scheme that did not want to be part of a parking management scheme. Frequently, the very same group of petitioners came back to another Petition Hearing because they had felt the impact and had changed their minds. Clearly it was best to try to get a consensus from the outset, but this is not always possible.

The Council had consulted in the roads around Northwood Hills station before and, each time this had been done, there was no clear supported mandate to proceed to an agreed scheme. In fact, the petition presented by ex-Councillor Mr David Bishop would have had a parking management scheme covering everywhere from Northwood Hills and beyond.

Councillor Burrows realised that there were particular pressures in Tolcarne Drive – the obvious ones were commuter parking, the school run traffic and the driving test centre. To that end, Councillor Burrows, the Northwood Hills Ward Members and Council officers in the parking design team were continuing to work closely to find a solution that would tackle the problems faced by residents without the spectre of creating fresh problems in other roads where, to date, there had not been such strong support for a parking management scheme.

Councillor Burrows advised that he and the Council took these concerns very seriously, and he urged the questioner to speak to his Ward Councillors and work with them to try to find a solution that satisfies the majority.