

# WHEELED BINS The Suburbs answer to Mr Caller

The arguments in favour of Wheelie Bins were put forward in the last issue of the Suburb News by Max Caller, the Director of Technical Services at Barnet. Unfortunately there was no attempt in this article to answer the many points raised by the Trust and Residents' Association. The four main areas of concern are Storage, Size, Front Gate Collection and Exceptions.

## Storage of Bins

One of our principle concerns is that when wheelie bins are not in use they will be left out in front gardens. With many terraced cottages on the Suburb it will be impossible to wheel the bins through the house, and there will be no alternative but to store them in front gardens. According to Barnet this is not their problem and what residents do with their bins is entirely their own affair. The only comment made by Max Caller on this issue was:

*'It should be noted that bins should not be left on the footway and certainly should not be stored there during the week'.*

In our opinion this is a dereliction of duty. What Barnet are saying is that although Hampstead Garden Suburb is an Outstanding Conservation Area and subject to an Article 4 Direction they are not concerned if the Suburb environment becomes ruined by the sight of plastic bins in front gardens. Under Clause 2 of the Article 4 Direction planning permission is required for:

*'The erection, construction or placing and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse as such, including the*



The cat sat on the mat with a wheelie bin for company.

*keeping of poultry, bees, pet animals, birds or other livestock for the domestic needs or personal enjoyment of the occupants of the dwellinghouse'.*

Yet Barnet appear to be turning a blind eye to something that will have a far bigger impact than any of these developments.

## Size of Bins

Barnet are actively encouraging residents to have the larger bins. Each household will get only one free bin and 'no refuse other than that placed in the bin will be collected'. Moreover one of the main arguments in favour of wheelie bins is that garden refuse will be collected. This will ensure that most residents will opt for the bins of 240 and 330 litre capacity which are 2.5 and 3.75 bigger than existing dustbins. This will make it even more likely that when not in use these bins will be left out in front gardens.

## Front Gate Collection

At the moment dustbins are collected from a variety of different locations. For example many terraced houses have passageways behind the gardens and the rubbish is collected from the back. In future the system will be standardised and residents will be required to wheel the bin to the front gate or boundary of their property. On the Suburb there is great diversity in the layout of gardens and the relationship between houses and the street. This new system takes no account of differences in level, distance between house and front gate, width of side passage, accessibility to rear garden, etc. To find out whether the system is viable on the Suburb the Trust and the Residents' Association have suggested that Barnet should undertake a detailed survey of all Suburb properties. It seems logical that this survey should be undertaken **before** the introduction of wheelie bins. Barnet are not prepared to carry out such an evaluation and instead residents with problems will

be required to contact a hot line. 'Such residents will be dealt with on an individual basis through a visit by a member of the Council staff to discuss their particular problems'.

## Exceptions

It is our opinion that wheelie bins are unworkable in many parts of the Suburb, but that until a survey has been undertaken it is impossible to assess the scale of the difficulties. Even without a survey Barnet are convinced that the system is practical and they can solve all the problems. In the opinion of Max Caller:

*'There may be one or two properties where the use of the system is completely impractical'.*

Without a survey how does he know that the number is only 'one or two' and not three or four, 100 or 200 or even more?

In conclusion it appears to the Trust and the Residents' Association that Barnet are introducing wheelie bins on the Suburb:

- without proper consultation
- without understanding the particular problems posed by the architecture and layout of the Suburb
- without recognising the status of the Suburb as an Outstanding Conservation Area
- without being ready to listen to reasoned comments and criticism
- without being prepared to introduce a pilot scheme or carry out a survey to find out whether wheelie bins are viable.

Although Barnet is a Conservative run borough the local Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservative Association have similar reservations and have written to Max Caller. CMK



Nice view, pity about the wheelie bins.



In so many cases they seem to be permanently on the pavement. They look like great black robots patrolling the streets.

