

RA far from calm over traffic continued from page 1

Because of financial limitations, it was agreed to start with entry treatments for all 16 Suburb entry points. This would be done as money became available, and the Ward Initiative funds would be used especially for this purpose. This decision was confirmed in a letter dated 15 December 1993, where Mr Vandersteen of LB Barnet stated that he and Councillor Khamisa were agreed on this approach.

A meeting on 20 January 1994 attended by C Kellerman, W Court, C Gregory, P Davies (English Heritage), D Rapson, C Vandersteen, and two colleagues from LBB, inspected the locations for entry treatment which had been agreed in December for implementation in the following order of priority:

- ▲ Ossulton Way/East End Road
- ▲ Hampstead Way/Finchley Road
- ▲ Willifield Way/Finchley Road

This was to have been completed by 31 March 1994 - (to date only Hampstead Way/Finchley Road has been completed).

The plan was that this year's Ward Initiative money would be used for further entry treatments.

Hampstead Way problems

In early summer, various residents in and around Heath Close apparently contacted Councillor Khamisa (the Lead Councillor on Ward Initiative money) concerning parking problems in Hampstead Way, which resulted in a site meeting taking place on 3 June 1994 with various local residents. Bill Bailey and David Rapson were also present at this meeting, at which it was proposed to strengthen the pavement for parking purposes in order to

widen the use of the road for cars, and using Ward Initiative money to pay for it.

Bill Bailey reported this to the June meeting of RA Council, who were totally opposed to this proposal on the grounds:

- a) that it had already been agreed that Ward Initiative funds would be spent on implementing the agreed traffic-calming scheme;
- b) that, in principle, we were against parking on pavements; and
- c) that traffic would be encouraged to go at even faster speeds.

Bill Bailey reported RA Council's strong opposition to these proposals to Councillor Khamisa in a letter date 8 June 1994, to which he received no reply. However, a further meeting was arranged on 12 June 1994 with local residents, at which the Trust Manager and Bill Bailey were also present.

At this meeting, in spite of Bill Bailey's clearly stated opposition, Councillor Khamisa insisted that the footway parking scheme should be implemented, using Ward Initiative money. Although traffic calming was mentioned at this meeting, no decisions were made to implement any traffic-calming measures to prevent cars travelling even faster than at present.

All of this was reported to the July RA Council meeting at which members reiterated that the Ward Initiative money which had already been committed to the RA traffic-calming scheme should not be hijacked in this way and that a letter couched in the strongest terms should be written to Councillor Khamisa inviting him to attend a meeting

of the Executive Committee to explain his actions.

Bill Bailey drafted the facts for a letter which, in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman sent to Councillor Khamisa on 9 July 1994.

Executive Committee meeting with Councillor Khamisa on 5 August 1994

Councillor Khamisa agreed to meet a specially convened meeting of the Executive Committee on 5 August 1994 attended by Léonie Stephen (RA Chairman), Peter Loyd (RA Vice-Chairman), David Rapson (Chairman Roads & Traffic Committee), Sylvia de Peyer (RA Hon Secretary), Camilla Raab (EC Member and Member of Roads & Traffic Committee), Councillor Roy Shutz, Councillor Khamisa and Christopher Kellerman (Trust Manager).

At the meeting, Councillor Khamisa was first invited to bring us up-to-date with what is happening. As well as pavement parking bays, we were pleased to learn that our pleas were being heeded that whatever was being done would be accompanied by some form of traffic-calming measures, although Councillor Khamisa said that traffic calming with road humps would take place in the next financial year. However, during the course of the conversation, he explained that he used the term 'road humps' as a form of shorthand to include other traffic calming measures.

When asked why the RA Roads & Traffic Committee, as the lead body in traffic calming, had not been either consulted or informed about these new measures which were now being proposed, he indicated that:

- a) it was up to Barnet Council officers to consult and inform us as necessary; and
- b) he saw little point in consulting the RA Further as he didn't agree with the RA traffic-calming scheme anyway.
- c) that traffic would be encouraged to go at even faster speeds.

He confirmed that the pavement parking in Hampstead Way, and any traffic-calming measures, were to be paid for from the Ward Initiative funds which he would use as he thought fit.

Furthermore, he alleged that Bill Bailey, on behalf of the RA, had agreed at the meeting on 21 June 1994 that the RA's traffic-calming scheme should be overturned in favour of his plans for dealing with Hampstead Way.

Bill Bailey has strongly denied this and has stated that he made it perfectly clear that he objected strongly, but Councillor Khamisa insisted that it was up to him to decide and he was going to go ahead with the arrangements for Hampstead Way.

He then said he considered that all his actions and the use of Ward Initiative funds for Hampstead Way were entirely justified as he had received many letters from residents in and around Heath Close lobbying him to take action and he was, therefore, doing this on their behalf.

Conclusions from meeting

This was not a particularly satisfactory meeting. It did succeed, however, in confirming the worst fears of the RA that Councillor Khamisa really has no intention of abiding by

already agreed decisions or of consulting the RA. His attitude appeared to all EC members present to be high handed.

The EC had in mind that the RA had spent a great deal of time and effort in producing a traffic-calming scheme with the help of traffic consultants and other experts which, although it would take time to implement as funds became available, had nevertheless been accepted by Barnet with agreement that Ward Initiative funds would be spent on its first phase of entry treatments progressively for the 16 Suburb entry points.

The EC felt, therefore, that it was extremely frustrating that the RA traffic-calming scheme had now been prejudiced, and its priorities altered without consultation, by the actions of one Councillor who had attempted to make out that the RA had agreed to his actions.

Further conclusions

It is now too late to amend the pavement parking scheme which is presently being implemented in Hampstead Way. And, in any case, with the re-surfacing which is planned to take place, the RA would not be against these parking bay arrangements provided:

- a) That adequate and responsible traffic calming measures were incorporated at the same time;
- b) that this whole scheme was paid for out of money other than the Ward Initiative funds which have already been earmarked for entry treatments; and
- c) that some constructive thought was given to the problems which will now be likely to be created by traffic

diverted on to Wilwood Road and other parts of the Suburb.

In order to make the best of a bad job, the RA has, therefore, pressed for sensible traffic-calming measures, appropriate for a conservation area, to be incorporated with the re-surfacing for this stretch of Hampstead Way..

Further information and future action

The EC has since learnt that all the 1993 and 1994 Initiative funds, less some £2,500, have now been spent on the Hampstead Way pavement parking bays and on the entry treatment at Finchley Road/Hampstead Way.

The actual re-surfacing of Hampstead Way will be paid for from a separate fund, but traffic-calming measures incorporated with this re-surfacing work will cost in the region of a further £9,000 which will now apparently have to be paid out of the 1995 Ward Initiative funds, the level of which - if any Ward Initiative funds at all allocated in 1995 - will be determined in the new year for payment on, or after, 1 April 1995. But, in order that the re-surfacing of Hampstead Way can be combined with traffic-calming, the work cannot start before about March 1995 at the earliest.

If no Ward Initiative funds are allocated in 1995, presumably the re-surfacing of Hampstead Way would be carried out without traffic-calming, with all the disadvantages that would result.

At the request of the RA Council, a meeting has been arranged with the Leader of Barnet Council in November.

87 Hampstead Way 22 Sept 94
NW11 6UJ

Sir,
I should like to start by saying that I am writing this letter as a Suburb resident and not as the Manager of the Trust.

If one took a poll of residents about what they consider to be the biggest threat facing the area, the vast majority would probably place speeding traffic at the top of their list. In November 1991 a joint Trust/RA Public Meeting was held on traffic and the Institute Hall was full to overflowing. It was recognised that while nothing could be done to stop certain Suburb roads such as Meadway, Ossulton and Temple Fortune Lane from being used by commuters as "rat runs", it was essential that measures be introduced to reduce the speed of traffic using these roads.

This is known as traffic calming, and can take a variety of forms. Besides humps or 'sleeping policemen', roads can be artificially narrowed by constructing pinch points and chicanes. Alternatively, rumble devices can be inserted into

the carriageway to discourage speeding. These measures are widely used throughout London. Traffic calming is extremely effective, and the lives of Oakwood Road residents have been transformed since humps were introduced. It would be wonderful if residents of other Suburb roads could enjoy the same level of peace and tranquillity.

Unfortunately, as far as Barnet is concerned, there is no significant traffic problem since people are not being killed or injured, and calming is low on the list of priorities. Until recently there have been no funds available. However, a couple of years ago Barnet introduced something called Ward Initiative Funds under which local councillors could allocate up to £10,000 each year to particular local projects.

The first year's allocation was used to instal a mini-roundabout at the junction of Willifield Way and Asmunds Hill. This year the money is being used to fund the entry treatment at Hampstead Way. Future Ward Initiative Funds are also likely to be spent on traffic-related problems

When Barnet started resurfacing

LETTERS

Hampstead Way between Wellgarth and Corringham Roads, they thought it would be sensible to construct laybys at the same time in order to solve the pavement-parking problem, which had become widespread along this stretch of road. The residents pointed out that the effect of the new laybys would be to speed up the flow of traffic, and for this reason calming measures are also going to be introduced. It obviously saves money if calming and routine resurfacing works are carried out simultaneously.

The argument between the Residents Association and the Suburb Councillors is over about what form traffic calming should take. The RA believe that since Barnet do not have the resources to introduce a Comprehensive scheme for the whole Suburb, they should concentrate on constructing 16 entry treatments at the main entrances on to the Suburb and speed-reducing devices at the 21 major junctions.

If one looks objectively at how these various approaches have worked out in practice, there is no doubt that the humps in Oakwood Road have been far more effective in reducing traffic speeds than either the Hampstead Way entry treatment or the mini-roundabout at the junction of Willifield Way and Asmunds Hill. For this reason I believe that a majority of Suburb residents support the approach being taken by Councillor Khamisa, and the limited resources available should be concentrated on real speed-reducing measures rather than on more entry treatments. In conclusion, it is essential that the RA accurately represents the views of Suburb residents on this most important issue, and they should either carry out a poll of all households or call another public meeting at which the whole subject can be properly discussed.

Yours,
Chris Kellerman

66 Ossulton Way 28 Sept 94
NW11 6UJ

Sir,
As a resident of Ossulton Way, I have come to accept a large volume of traffic as a necessary evil of living on

a main estate road. However, what I cannot tolerate - and should not have to - is the speed at which these vehicles insist on travelling, often more than 50 mph. Drivers going this fast will kill pedestrians or even people in their front gardens, if they carelessly mount the pavement as a result of, say, a chance blowout or momentary loss of control. Recent Government television ads have highlighted the fact that even the statutory speed limits for many roads are unsafe depending on the conditions. But this sort of polite hint, to inspire a driver's "good will", is a pointless exercise. For, let's face it, time and time again it has been shown that the anonymity of the driver's seat makes for absolutely no care and consideration for other road users: drivers, cyclists and least of all, pedestrians.

However despicable Councillors Khamisa's apparent hijacking of the Ward Initiative Funds may be, perhaps the loss of the gates proposed for the junction of Ossulton Way with East End Road is not too great. In fact I have little confidence that such a subtlety could have ever been remotely successful as a "traffic calmer". What we need is something that will categorically and completely STOP the high speed runs down Ossulton Way, particularly between Brim Hill and East End Road. Humps are obvious solution, but an alternative might be a 15 mph speed limit with radar cameras which would allow the issue of enforceable speeding tickets.

Let us hope - no let us demand that the council's review of the Ward Initiative Scheme does not produce just another wishy-washy report. We want tough action against dangerous drivers and we want it NOW!

Yours,
Tye R Blackshaw

4 Addison Way 6 Oct 94
NW11 6AJ

Sir,
The Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association and our Roads and Traffic Committee are very much aware of the problem of traffic speeding along Ossulton Way, as detailed in Tye Blackshaw's letter of 28th September.

Repeatedly we have stated that any traffic-calming proposals must consider our Suburb as a whole, and this has been the advice of all the experts we have consulted. If we deal with traffic along one road, it is inevitable that the problem will become transferred to adjoining roads. Plans were agreed last year between the RA, HGS Trust and LB Barnet councillors and officers. This is why we were so agast at Councillor Khamisa's unilateral decision to initiate the work along Hampstead Way, which was not to have been an early stage in any of these agreed plans.

We carefully consider very many requests and proposals from residents, and urge residents to approach us, always, before writing to councillors and the press. We are a democratic body that is elected by residents at our AGMs. Over half of the Suburb households are RA members, and we try to do what is the most beneficial for all. If we are not made aware of specific concerns, we cannot be expected to deal with them.

Certainly it is worrying to learn that the invaluable Ward Initiative

Funds are to be considered by Borough Councillors; we shall strongly urge their retention.
Yours, Sylvia de Peyer

95 Corringham Road 22 July 94
NW11 6UJ

Sir,
I am delighted to hear that the Trust is getting tough with double glazers, but what about the quality of life in our part of the Suburb?

Corringham Road is now part of a building site and will stay that way for at least 18 months. In the mornings it can take up to 20 minutes to drive through Corringham Road, which is clearly a hazard in case of fire and emergency, but nothing has been done.

It is quite clear that none of the local residents supported the new estate being built. It will cause tremendous parking problems and will probably force that part of the Suburb to become a one-way road system.

It is time that the HGS Trust showed loyalty to its residents, rather than vested interests.

Yours, Aron Vecht

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