

Letters to the Editor

Harford Walk
N2 OJB

Sir
I feel I have no option but to respond for myself and on behalf of my neighbours to the letter regarding the Controlled Parking Zone at East Finchley Station.

We have lived in our present home for 27 years and during this time have unfortunately witnessed the complete transformation of our surrounding roads from 7 am to 6 pm, five days each week, into a huge car park.

The drivers making use of our streets fell into two categories: local Suburb commuters who were often moving their vehicles less than a mile and many hundreds more who drove twenty miles or further to continue the final part of their commute by tube. Neither of these groups would necessarily have been the problem that they became if they had only parked with consideration and a modicum

of common sense. However, cars were parked across our access drives, up to and across the corners and along both sides of narrow roads. Deansway became impassable during the rush hour and every bend or entry turn in this area became a dangerous 'blind' exercise as it was impossible to have a clear sight line of any oncoming traffic between the parked cars. Fire appliances would have been seriously impeded if a fire had broken out in these roads and it was these safety considerations that Barnet Council were legally bound to take into account as well as the wishes of local residents.

After a conversation with a commuter who had partially blocked my drive one day, I discovered that he drove in from North Watford every weekday and freely admitted that if delayed by heavy traffic, would dump his vehicle wherever he could. I imagine most of my neighbours like myself also got tired of the regular cacophony of shrieking car alarms frequently activated by passing traffic vibration or strong winds.

Perhaps Hill Top has escaped this trend but in our corner of the Suburb, rightly or wrongly, many garages have been absorbed into people's living space and many households have more than one vehicle. Therefore we do not often need to use our own section of the public road and some of us even have the temerity to invite the occasional car driving visitor.

Barnet Council does profit from our scheme but I imagine most residents in Deansway, for example, find that their permits are actually far cheaper than the constant replacement of wing mirrors and re-spraying of scraped cars that was their lot before the introduction of regulated parking.

So, yes, Mr Shaw, we did vote in favour of the parking scheme because when we all purchased our properties we did so in the belief that we were buying a house in Hampstead Garden Suburb. We did not realise that our streets, according to your letter, were merely there to provide a car park for the rest of the Suburb.

Foolishly, we also thought that the station car park at East Finchley was there for local residents who wish to drive to the station. Surely this is still the case?

I am sorry if Mr Watford commuter is now someone else's headache but personally, I feel these few roads had suffered from others' selfishness for long enough.

Yours
Tina Janering

Hampstead Way
NW11 7XX

Sir
If you want to know why residents are not joining the HGSRA, you have only to look at the front page of The Suburb News, Winter 2002 - 2003, Issue 78. In my opinion it is totally patronising.

Yours
Harry Tenther

Maurice Walk
NW11 6JX

Sir
I was very interested in the photo on the front page of the Winter Issue of Phil Jarrett, our very own street sweeper.

I was so pleased to know his name as I always give him a cheery greeting each time I see him.

Yours
Edna S Weiss

PS. The Instrument of Foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1768, provides for an official 'sweeper' with a salary of £10 per annum - a handsome salary in the 1700s I would think!

10 Brim Hill
N2 OHF

Sir
I just have to put pen to paper to tell you how much I enjoyed the Winter Issue of the Suburb News.

It is both informative and illuminating in content and I am most impressed by the quality of the reproduced colour photos.

I was particularly touched by Chris Kellerman's tribute to the late Alan Lawson who, as you know, was so helpful to the HGS Theatre Club over several years. Chris's article was quite an eye opener about Alan's life and it brought such a lump to my throat. I knew Ann and Alan in their latter years and often met them when we were out on our walks through the Suburb. He will be sadly missed by us all, as is testament to both Chris Kellerman's and Janette Harris's tribute.

I also knew Val Gregory quite well when our respective sons attended Annemont School.

Another article that caught my imagination was that written by Michael Holton about the Warburg family, entitled 'Hitler's Suburb Hit List'. This was an

extraordinary family saga that had me enthralled.

Then to top it all, there was the Advertorial 'The End of an Era' about Dr David Price and his wife Daphne, who I have had the pleasure of knowing socially for a number of years.

I have always looked forward to my copy of the Suburb News dropping through my letter box and have always read it from cover to cover as soon as it arrives. This time I found myself emotionally involved and very proud to be a small part of the Suburb. I have lived here since April 1955 and have seen many changes but one thing that impresses me most is the camaraderie that exists among the community. You and the publication play no small part in keeping that feeling alive. Long may it prevail.

With grateful thanks for all your hard work and best wishes for a successful 2003.

Yours
Valerie R Codion

Sir
In Suburb News you invited readers to give their views on whether the RA is getting it wrong as new residents are not joining the RA. No, I don't think the RA is getting it wrong, but perhaps some 'improvements' could be made in letting new residents know what living in the Suburb is all about.

When I first moved to the Suburb almost 27 years ago, a lot of the original residents and/or their children were still alive. There seemed to be a much greater sense of community spirit in those days and people were more neighbourly than appears to be the case now.

It seems to be a sign of the times that a lot of new residents can no longer be bothered with neighbours, let alone join the RA. Some are only interested in ripping their newly acquired property to pieces, renovating and then selling.

New neighbours do not introduce themselves any longer nor do they appear to want to warn their immediate neighbours of any noise resulting from their renovations - including Sundays! Standards of civil behaviour and decency sadly appear to have gone. It's everyone for him/herself and no-one seems to care.

I don't know whether every household in the Suburb receives the Suburb News or only RA members. If residents have not joined, would it not be an idea to ask the Estate Agents in the first place to tell new residents of the rules and regulations applying, if this has not already been done. Secondly, the RA has, of course, a full record of paid up members, so any household not on record could be approached in a gentle way. After all, it may be of benefit to new residents in the future if they themselves should get new people moving in near them.

Name and Address supplied.

Middleway
NW11 6SG

Sir
I would like to assure Gary Shaw (Letters Winter 02/03) that he is not the only person who thinks the Controlled Parking Zone at East Finchley Station is complete folly. I wrote to our MP to protest and am astonished that the local councillors imagine Mr Shaw is a lone voice.

Such a parking scheme presents three major problems: Whilst helping one group of people, it pushes the parking problem on to someone else just a little further away.

On the one hand we are being encouraged to use public transport and then, on the other, it is made increasingly difficult to do so. Many people who live in the middle of the Hampstead Garden Suburb need to drive to a station and park before taking a bus or train: it is simply not practical for them to walk or they may not have the time for the H2. The rational response is that they drive and so different branches of the government machine pursue totally contradictory policies.

It encourages a disrespect for the laws and for those who formulate the laws. Whilst it may be a good joke at dinner parties to complain about what fools council officials or councillors are, a healthy society needs to respect its representatives and officials. Instead the burden of unfair taxation and inconvenience that is represented by burgeoning parking restrictions everywhere one turns, is leading to growing and widening resentment. Every time we see a traffic warden in East Finchley or Golders Green or see a yellow line in a location that makes no obvious sense, there is a resentment of the oppression of overbearing authority that, I say again, is not healthy for our society.

Let us hope that our elected representatives may yet pay attention to the groundswell of opposition. Though I agree with Mr Shaw, if they don't then let us, in the words of that old adage of democracy, 'throw the scoundrels out'.

Yours
Brian Finch

Erskine Hill,
NW11 6EY

Sir
Your recent headline in the Suburb News stated that few new residents are joining the RA. I suspect it is because they don't know how to! I moved here just over a year ago and during this time, no-one has invited me to become a member, either by knocking on my door or by putting a leaflet through my letterbox.

I attended last year's AGM with a neighbour and, even at the meeting, there was no way of joining - there were no membership forms lying around and no visitors' book to sign, which would have alerted the Committee that new residents had attended.

Perhaps you could insert a membership application form in the Suburb News? Even in the 2002 Annual Report, where the Officers and Council Members are listed, no membership officer is named nor is any contact number or address given, apart from the Secretary.

When I moved in, I received literature from the HGS Trust, but no mention was made of the RA. I have had numerous dealings with the Trust during the year, but never have I been asked if I was a member of the RA, which I would very much like to join.

Similarly, there has been no contact with Neighbourhood Watch. There is a sticker on my front door to say that this house belongs, but I have not been contacted or invited to any meeting.

So I suspect the fault lies with your willing helpers. You can easily find out who the new residents are - either from the Trust or from the Electoral Roll. I look forward to hearing from someone!

Yours
Judith Samson

The RA's Membership Committee and its representatives deliver a pack welcoming new residents to all houses when they change hands. Every February an envelope containing a membership card and a reply paid envelope is delivered to all households except a few flats where access is difficult and we have no representative living there. In May members who have paid have their receipted membership cards and a Yellow Directory delivered by their membership rep. Households who have not paid subscriptions by then have a reminder and a directory delivered. We are sorry if all these failed to find you. Ed

Jane Collins

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