

ZONE J PARKING CAMPAIGN – PRESS RELEASE

Shepherds Bush Residents win first battle in campaign against ‘draconian’ parking hours

Residents have won an important legal challenge over Hammersmith and Fulham Council’s controversial decision to impose 9 am to 9 pm parking controls, seven days a week, on part of Shepherd’s Bush.

In a climb down, which could have repercussions for parking controls throughout the Borough, the Council agreed to settle and pay residents’ legal costs, rather than face a judicial review in the High Court, which was likely to have declared the scheme unlawful. There will now be a new consultation on what residents want.

“This is more marvellous news”, says David Mills, who initiated the legal challenge to the Council’s parking scheme. “It could help residents throughout the borough.”

Despite the arrival of Westfield, excluding brief problems on match days at QPR, this part of Shepherd’s Bush has not suffered serious parking problems. Running through it though, is the busy Uxbridge Road, with numerous shops, restaurants and Mosque. Residents living near the Uxbridge Road *have* suffered real problems.

Over the last 8 years the council, has conducted four consultations, all offering extended control hours as the solution. In all four consultations, residents rejected this.

“We didn’t want just to complain about what the Council was offering,” says Mills, “so we set out to research what the best solution might be. We looked at the solutions that have been used in other parts of London which have similar problems.”

What residents found, they say, is that in *all* these areas, Councils have provided resident-only bays, often alongside shared-bays, for both residents and visitors. Residents can use the shared bays – which often have much shorter control hours than the resident only bays – free of charge.

“It sounds a bit complicated”, says Mills, “but we think this sort of scheme would provide real help to our residents, while not hurting anyone else. It would balance the needs of visitors and residents, as fairly as possible, and help everybody.

The Council has been repeatedly asked to offer such a solution, but has always refused.

Then in December 2016, it suddenly introduced 9 am to 9 pm parking hours, seven days a week in part of the area, while leaving hours unchanged in the other. The new parking hours – which have been described as “draconian” – followed a consultation in 2015 in which 59 per cent had voted against the scheme that has now been imposed.

The Campaign group says new parking charges have hit the ability of families to care for their elderly and to spend time together – family life has suffered as a result. Parking restrictions have also hit local churches and mosques. It has also hit local churches.

Local Church of England vicar, Rev Bob Mayo of St. Stephens in the Uxbridge Road, has described the Council’s decision as making the area “a meaner and harder place to live”.

“When the Council conducted that consultation”, says Robbin Pierce, who is coordinating the Zone J Parking Campaign opposing the changes, “it promised that any change would only be implemented if it had the support of the ‘majority of residents’. It then completely ignored this. The Council also chose to implement the option of splitting the parking zone in two which had attracted the *least* support of any option in its consultation. Only 8.6 per cent had voted for this.” She added.

The Zone J Parking Campaign – which has set up a website: www.zonejparkingcampaign.co.uk – maintains that in some of the streets with extended controlled hours, it can still be difficult for residents to park, so they are no better off, despite the additional inconvenience and expense they and their visitors are suffering; and in the part of the zone where parking hours have been left as they were, a displacement of parking has occurred, making life much more difficult, as well as causing a big increase in congestion, as drivers circulate looking for places to park.

Fundamentally, the group says, what has been done, hasn’t solved the problem.”

“It seems”, says Mills, “that the Council has been intent on imposing its own scheme, regardless of what residents think. What we believe is the best solution has never been put to residents.”

Although the group welcomes the Council’s climb down and promise of a new consultation, there is still some concern.

“We are worried”, says Robbin Pierce, “that despite the new consultation, the Council will still not offer what residents want and then try to exploit the confusion this will cause, to re-impose the present scheme.

“Hopefully, we’re wrong about this. We’ve talked to residents and resident groups, we’ve talked to the churches and the Mosque and we have talked to Bush Hall and local shops and restaurants, to come up with a solution. Now we want to talk with the council. If they have misgivings let’s get them out in the open and discuss them. There have been four failed consultations in the past. Let’s make the fifth one a success, by working together.”

Notes for Editors

In the last financial year, 2015-2016, local authorities generated a combined ‘profit’ of £756 million from on and off-street parking activities.

Hammersmith and Fulham generated the fourth largest sum from parking, £22.7 million.