



Letters to the Editor

Rethink this crossings review

Dear Editor,

On 20 February, Councillor Brian Coleman brought a paper to the Cabinet of Barnet Council with the proposal "that a systematic review of traffic signal controlled junctions and pedestrian crossings be undertaken with a view to removal or replacement with an alternative method of control where these are no longer needed." In other words, he intends to review every single pelican crossing and traffic light in the borough, with a view to removing it.

At the meeting, he stated that "road traffic accidents in Barnet have dropped like a stone" since he was put in charge of road policy in 2002. This statement is not borne out by the facts. Between 2002 and 2010 road traffic accidents in Barnet fell by 18%, whereas in London as a whole they have fallen by 40% between 2000 and 2010, with most of the gains being made in later years.

In 2010 Barnet roads saw nine deaths, the highest number of any London borough, and 1,520 accidents resulting in a personal injury, the second highest of any London borough. The vast majority of accidents occurred on Barnet maintained roads. Given that road traffic accidents are statistically more likely in deprived and densely populated areas (broadly not a description of Barnet) these figures are shocking.

Councillor Coleman also stated that "zebra crossings are often safer than pelican crossings". We would dispute this. Pelican crossings are easier for children to use, as it is recognised that children have difficulty in judging speed and distance. Pelican crossings are also easier and safer for older people and those with disabilities to use, in particular those with sensory impairment. Pelican

crossings have visual cues (green man), auditory cues (beeping tone) and tactile cues (cones which turn under the control box) which help those with sight and/or hearing problems to cross safely.

We, the undersigned, call on Barnet Council to abandon this planned expenditure and, instead, invest the allocated funds to improve road safety.

Yours faithfully,

Julia Hines, Chair, Age UK Barnet; Dee Oelman, Headteacher, St Mary's and St John's Primary School, NW4; Rebecca Mottershead, Headteacher, Church Hill School, Burlington Rise EN4; Philip Taylor, Headteacher, All Saints Church of England Primary School, NW2; Stanley Davison, Chair, Barnet 55+ Forum; Manjit Dulay, Headteacher, Summerside Primary School, N12; Lisa Meyer, Acting Headteacher, Sunnyfields Primary School, NW4; David Howard, Chair, Federation of Residents' Associations in Barnet; Nilottama Patel, Chair, Barnet Asian Women's Association; Susy Stone, Headteacher, Akiva School, N3; Barbara Hogg, Vice Chair, Barnet Borough Sight Impaired; Jeffrey Raphael, Chair, Disability Action in the borough of Barnet; Sally Lajalati, Headteacher, Colindale Primary School, NW9; Chris Read, Chief Officer, A Smile for a Child; Zaheer Ali, Chair, Salaam; Dulcie Burnett, Chair, Burnt Oak District Pensioners' Association; Lynn Maggs-Wellings, Headteacher, Lyonsdown School, EN5; Laura Cohen, President, W1 Finchley; Susan Swinburne, School Travel Plan Champion, Courtland Primary School, NW7; Sogand Shaker, Barnet Member of Youth Parliament; Dr Dominic Luckett, Headmaster, Mill Hill School and Chief Executive of Mill Hill School Foundation.

Where have our barriers gone?

Dear Editor,

Once upon a time, there were robust crash barriers outside Martin Primary School, offering protection to over 500 children every weekday, against the mighty traffic roaring down the A1000. Then, suddenly one day, the barriers disappeared.

Multiple choice. Were they: a) Spirited away by aliens; b) Melted down to make Spitfires; c) Taken away for no apparent reason by the London Borough of Barnet?

These barriers may not have been especially pretty, but they certainly did a good job of stopping small children running/scooting off the kerb and into the road, and protecting the families who gather on that particular corner from any vehicles mounting the pavement. Please can we have them back before a totally preventable accident occurs?

Yours faithfully,

Harriet Connides, Manor Park Road, N2.

De-clutter our streets

Dear Editor,

I'm writing in support of Valerie Teague's letter in your March issue regarding what can only be called a 'bin-blight' on our roads.

Our otherwise very lovely street, Sedgemere Avenue, is afflicted with an absurd number of huge wheelie bins which clutter up our front yards. Four houses could easily share one or two of these bins; instead we have five directly outside our front doors. This is of course in addition to the eight (!) recycling bins that we jointly possess.

I have spoken to several neighbours on this issue who all agree that the bins are an eyesore. Many of us would rather they were situated round the back of our houses (as they were in former times) or in a communal area. I would dearly love the council

to come up with some streamlined alternatives to the current situation which perhaps residents could then vote on. I think this would be a very popular measure.

Yours faithfully, Clare Kneeshaw, Sedgemere Avenue, N2

Battle of the buses

Dear Editor,

I, like your reader (Letters, THE ARCHER, February 2012), have missed so many buses because they failed to stop. Many passengers wish to alight from one bus and get on another at the stop outside Costa in High Road, East Finchley, but buses do go flying past, unless you can literally jump in front and stop them.

Mothers with buggies and elderly people don't stand a chance. I have berated drivers if I am on the bus that fails to stop. Please shame these bad drivers.

Yours faithfully,

G Barker, Aylmer Road, N2.

Problem periods

Dear Editor,

Many teenage girls and young women suffer great pain and discomfort during their periods, often from their first time. Whilst for some this pain and discomfort will settle down as their hormones do, for others a monthly period can become something to dread.

I understand about this pain as I suffered as a teenager, experiencing excruciating pain, heavy blood loss with additional complications of fainting, nausea and dreadful fatigue. Many years later I found out that I had endometriosis and with the right medical treatment I have been able to cope much better with my symptoms.

Endometriosis Awareness Week was 5-12 March, and as part of this the charity Endometriosis UK has developed some new information aimed at helping teenage girls and young women understand more about

their periods and what to do if you are worried that your experience is not normal. All the information is available for free on a new website www.aboutmyperiods.wordpress.com including stories from other teenagers or young women.

Anyone worried can also phone the charity's free helpline on 0808 808 2227 where trained volunteers listen to your concerns and provide help and information on where to go next.

The charity also has a main website www.endometriosis-uk.org which includes lots more useful information including details of local support groups, how to join as a member, raise funds, or ways to help raise awareness.

I suffered for much longer than I should have because I didn't know that what I was going through wasn't normal. I really benefited from asking for help and finding out more. So I would encourage all teenagers and young women to visit the About My Periods website and see how you can help yourselves.

Yours faithfully Georgina North, Baronsmere Road, N2.

I made it!

Dear Editor,

Just a quick note to say "Thank You" so much to everyone who sponsored me on my latest adventure climbing Mount Kilimanjaro (THE ARCHER, November 2011). It was a brilliant experience, although even tougher than I'd imagined on summit ascent night, and definitely one that I'll never forget, cheesy though that sounds.

The best bit, though, is that I have managed to raise a fantastic £3,944 for the Alzheimers Society. If you'd like to increase this total, you can donate at www.justgiving.com/amandasawkins-kilimanjaro-trek2012. Next year, Everest Base Camp (no, I'm not joking!)

Yours faithfully, Amanda Sawkins, Richmond Road, N2.

Springtime nutrition

By Claire Cantor

Spring is a great time to refresh your diet, as well as uplift your spirit, with a selection of seasonal vegetables. Energising and cleansing foods include cabbage, kale, spinach and watercress; whilst asparagus, leeks, peas, globe artichokes and broccoli are valuable sources of fibre, folate, vitamins C and E, potassium and calcium.

Why not try cooking artichokes with lemon juice, olive oil or sprigs of thyme for extra flavour? Or, to make asparagus even more delicious, roast it in teriyaki or sauté lightly with red peppers and garlic. This particular spring vegetable is known to aid digestion as well as relieve kidney, bladder and liver problems.

The humble cabbage has been the focus of much research for its vitamin C, phytochemical and anti-carcinogenic content. Curried cabbage with raisins is a tasty serving option or tangy sauerkraut which is full of live enzymes for healthy intestinal flora.

Leeks are another powerhouse food and contain saponins, thought to help prevent cancer cells from multiplying, as well as helping to strengthen bones and lower cholesterol. Steam and drizzle with olive oil and lemon, or sauté with ginger and shitake mushrooms.

Enjoy bright green peas brimming with vitamins C and A. Try them minted, or a spring pea soup with a teaspoon of sesame oil with snipped nori and spring onions for a garnish. Wake up to spring! For other delicious and nutritious recipe ideas go to www.Clairecantor.co.uk.

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