



Parking rules are 'isolating' for residents of care home

By Lynn Winton

Hammerson House, the residential care home on The Bishops Avenue, N2, is appealing to Barnet Council to reverse or modify its new all-day parking restrictions, which they say have caused misery for family members, visitors and volunteers and increased isolation for its residents.



Double yellows: Parking on The Bishops Avenue close to Hammerson House is now severely restricted. Photo Mike Coles

The road outside the home used to be open parking all day but since the autumn there has been a yellow line forbidding parking from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturday. The home has some on-site parking but not sufficient for all visitors.

One family member told us: "We can't park when we go to visit our ageing, dying mum. It's terrible enough, but the new parking ban makes visiting so much harder than it should be."

A staff member explained: "Volunteers and relatives are struggling to park anywhere near Hammerson House. Many of our visitors are older themselves. This is causing distress for residents and practical problems for staff and emergency access."

The 116-bed care home is urging the council to reconsider its approach and implement a more balanced solution, such as limited-time parking, resident permits, or partial-day restrictions, that ensures safety without cutting off vital access for care home residents and their families.

Chief Executive Jenny Pattinson said: "Our residents' well-being depends on connection with their families, volunteers, and the local community. These restrictions have unintentionally isolated some of the most vulnerable people in our society. We are appealing to the council and local MP to work with us urgently to find a compassionate, practical solution."

MP Sarah Sackman is supporting their appeal and told TheArcher: "I have been speaking with Transport for London about local public transport provision and looking into concerns around parking availability with Barnet Council. We should make caring for the elderly as smooth as possible."

As we went to press, Barnet Council acknowledged there may now be "different parking pressures in the area" and confirmed that they would be reviewing the parking arrangements and putting forward new proposals for residents and business owners to comment on.



Hold fire: Emily Cathrine Haldane, right, and fellow cast member on stage during their tour

Director takes interactive theatre to the classroom

Primary school pupils across Barnet were invited to step directly into a story, shaping its twists, discoveries and big decisions, through an interactive theatre production called *Lose the Path, Find Your Way*.

The show, created and performed by Cracking Slate, toured classrooms across the borough in October as part of a wider national tour that also visited Southwark, Hampshire, Lincoln and Luton.

East Finchley resident Emily Cathrine Haldane, a community arts facilitator, directed the production and toured in it as a performer. For this project, she collaborated with a creative team of more than ten artists, including a puppetry designer, composer, movement director, creative producer and stage manager.

Designed for ages eight to 11, *Lose the Path, Find Your Way* blended physical theatre, puppetry, cinematic music and improvised storytelling. At key moments in the performance, children in the audience collectively voted on what the characters should do next, influencing relationships, consequences and outcomes. No two performances were ever the same.

Across its tour, the piece reached 974 young people. In one school, a student reflected: "It's hard to make choices, but after watching the show I can see how important it is to trust your gut." For Emily, this is the purpose of the work: creating space where children's voices genuinely matter. "Young people already hold insight, creativity and empathy. When we invite them to shape the story, they reveal it," she said. More information, images and a short trailer can be found at: <https://crackingslate.com>

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Generation Games

How long's a generation? In the weird world of rock and roll it's about seven years. You know, just long enough to get through your teens and be headbutted by adult reality. And that's why rock'n'roll is always rebooting itself.

Let's start with Elvis and 1956. All sneer, snarl and gyrating hips, a piece of pure white trash sounding black and upsetting Middle America. OK, so they shoved him in the army and turned him into a cabaret act, but the job was done.

Next stop 1963 and the return of the guitar bands as four lads from Liverpool ripped up the rule book. They had style and cool Britannia ran riot across the mid-sixties. And yes, by about 1969 they were splitting up and it was time for something new.

This time it wasn't just music it was a lifestyle and that meant posing. The first half of the 1970s was the most pretentious time ever. The sound got louder, the solos got longer and people were so hung up on being cool that they became boring. Rock band Yes, the high priests of pomposity, produced a double album of four songs based on some eastern poem that was designed for stoned hippies to get stoned to.

Pink Floyd were no better, but more successful and even the hardest rock bands lost the plot. Led Zeppelin went flabby as time went on. Less Rock'n'Roll and more Stairlifts to Heaven, complete with 20-minute guitar solos and the inevitable half-hour drum solo. Bored? Yes, I was, I needed the weird and not Bohemian Rhapsody.

I wasn't the only one, because 1976 was time for a change. In New York, the Ramones and Blondie were getting down and trashy and over here Dr Feelgood were doing the same. All it needed was something to really annoy the parents and the hippies and thank heaven it arrived.

The Sex Pistols weren't a great band, but they were a great idea. They said 'sod off' and played loud and nasty. The Damned appeared at the same time and The Clash weren't far behind. Within a year hair was shorter, flares were banned and speed had taken over from dope and acid. The Pistols had even sworn on prime time TV and if you were 16 music was exciting again. Generation games? You bet, living fast and heading for burn out like everyone before them, but that's teenage rock'n'roll dreams for you.