



Camden Residents' Association Newsletter

October 2019

www.camdenresidentsbath.org

MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR THOSE LIVING ON OR NEAR CAMDEN ROAD

“Making Camden Road more like a street”

by Jeremy Labram, Chair.

This headline came from one of our committee members. The sepia picture, from the 19th century, came courtesy of 'Bath in Time' and is also very poignant to us.

It suggests how the street worked 150 years ago and forces us to reflect on how things are today and how they might be. Yes, there's some parking and traffic but so much more going on.

We now have a road which is used as a rat run – most of the traffic is simply passing through. It's hard to think of Camden as a neighbourhood or a living street with congestion at peak times and speeding traffic at other times creating noise, noxious gases and the certainty of serious accidents.

I was speaking to a representative for another Residents Association with a famous crescent, who said if they don't do something about their traffic it will become like Camden Crescent and that was threatening to them!

By now not including cars the proposed Clean Air Zone (CAZ) will have no significant effect on traffic volumes for us. Fortunately, there is another opportunity presented by the new council administration which we need to test with you, our residents.

The Committee have been deliberating over the 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood' concept, LTN for short, and it has given its active

support to a working group led by Joanna Wright, Joint Transport Lead in the Council Cabinet, to explore how it might work for NE Bath and beyond. We don't know how it might look in practice yet but some principles are pretty clear.

If you go to the centerfold of this newsletter, you'll see the kind of thing we are being asked to consider. We'll be presenting this at the AGM (see back page) and getting a first indication of how our residents, as well as our close neighbours in other districts, feel about it. We'll convene in the Claremont pub afterwards when we can chat more informally about LTNs and llife after 31st October!

Other activities

Meanwhile there's been a lot going on in Camden this year which we can't feature in detail here for want of space. But our website posts news every week so do subscribe to that at

www.https://camdenresidentsbath.org/

A few items have squeezed themselves onto the back page.

Finally

We make no apology for featuring again an excruciatingly ironic piece from a Camden Resident and previous editor of the Bath Chronicle. What an advocate for our cause – happy reading!

Deeply sorry for holding you up

May I use your columns to offer a whole-hearted apology to all of the drivers who use Camden Road for their morning and evening commutes in and out of town?

I'm sure that all Camden Road residents will join me in this sincere expression of regret for the frustration and inconvenience we add to your working days in Bath.

Many of us have cars which, when not needed, we park selfishly in the residents' bays. We are deeply sorry that these bays, in some stretches on both sides of the road, are the cause of stress for commuters, who have to stop when we reverse into them.

This creates congestion on the narrow roadway, which we now recognize must be intensely annoying for you.

This might be why some drivers are tempted to express their entirely understandable rage by, during off-peak hours, ignoring the 20-mph signs. Perhaps they are so blinded by rage that the 20 is mistaken for 60.

We understand, too, that our local 6/7 bus service contributes to the problems you face. Thoughtless as it is, we use these buses which, when they stop to let us get on and off, compounds the jams and, entirely justifiably, the commuter anger you feel.

And we're not unmindful of the air pollution you might notice should you have your car windows open. It's not much of a consolation, but we are profoundly repentant for being here.

David Kernek
Bath

Views across the Committee

WHY I SUPPORT LOOKING AT A LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD

The CRA Committee has agreed to collaborate on work led by the Council on how the Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) concept might be applied to Bath. I felt able to support this collaboration as less traffic should mean more road safety, both for pedestrians and for drivers and less pollution.



WHAT MIGHT AN LTN INVOLVE?

The best definition of an LTN can be found from a link on our web-site to. Such a scheme aims to make driving vehicles through a neighbourhood difficult and encourage 'active transport' (walking and cycling) or public transport. Possible tools include road closures, busgates, one-way roads, yield/priority signage along narrow stretches of road, speed bumps, encouragement to use school buses and, of course, zebra crossings. And each of these choices requires one to examine where diverted traffic is to go and whether this is realistic and bearable (London Road). And when considering the 'bearability' one must remember that there are many causes to increased traffic in NE Bath such as the lack of anywhere to leave your car for the last bit of the journey into the city.

BIGGER THAN JUST CAMDEN

From the procedural point of view, the CRA in practice and via its elected Committee members, only "covers" Camden Crescent, Camden Road up to Claremont and some adjacent roads and thus residents in other areas of NE Bath, who could be affected by any reduction on the major road, must be consulted. Larkhall, with its thriving village centre as well as Fairfield Park, and Walcot need to take an active part.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Finally, as pedestrian safety is a permanent ongoing requirement irrespective of work on an LTN, the Committee is actively pursuing a solution to the imbroglio of the dangerous six-way Lansdown Road / Morford / Camden Crescent & Row and Hedgemoor junction.

Frank, Camden Crescent

I'M FOR IT BUT THERE ARE CHALLENGES

Life in Upper Hedgemoor Road is pleasant, being close to the city and to our local park. However, I feel that few residents of urban areas could fail to see the benefits of making streets less car dominant, and more amenable to other ways of getting around.



The concept of low traffic neighbourhoods in cities is gaining momentum, and there are examples of success of this in several cities in UK and elsewhere in Europe. However, in Bath there are challenges to achieving this – poor public transport, lots of hills and narrow streets. I do not believe that this should stop us from working with the council, along with other areas in Bath, to achieve an improvement over what we have now.

Caroline, Hedgemoor

I'M SOLD BUT IT'S GOT TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO MOST OF US

There is no doubt that any change to how we do things now may create suspicion for some.



However when we, as residents, weigh up the benefits to our life on the street, as well as to the many others who use 'active means' of travel along our road it will probably be really worth it.

Yes, I'll have to adjust how I travel but that's all. It'll be good for me and everyone else to consider the bus or walk even more or get the bike out. And perhaps to have space to lock up my bike on the street rather than fighting with it up and down front steps will be very incentivising!

We are not advocating building 'Fortress Camden'. If there is inconvenience caused to people away from Camden and NE Bath trying to get through, then we have to accept that same inconvenience as well by being subject to any restrictions too.

I'm also concerned that any scheme involves as little cost and intervention as possible. For example I'm asking the council to consider extending the purpose of the cameras destined for the CAZ boundary as a bus gate too.

No one can be sure of the results so making it low cost and adjustable or even reversible seems sensible

Jeremy, Prospect Place

IT'S A BALANCE

I do not own a car so reducing traffic in Camden will not inconvenience me directly. I can just look forward to having cleaner air, less noise, and more people walking, cycling, and talking to each in the street. Camden is a good example of how unrestricted car traffic can blight an area. At last it seems there is a real opportunity to rebalance road usage and bring life to the street.

Yet, even without a car, my family is still dependent on motor vehicles. They bring us our deliveries, the tradespeople to fix our house, and are the taxis that we occasionally use. Some of these services are now using electric vehicles and cargo bikes but it will be a while before that is common. My hope is that reducing traffic overall will help to make these services more efficient and more attractive so making it easier for people to live without using cars all the time.

So, I'm looking to achieve a balance that severely limits rat running and discourages very short trips by car but that also allows residents easy access and helps services to reach our homes.

Bob, Upper Camden Place

THE LONG VIEW

As a long-term resident of Camden Rd, and a long-term member of Camden Residents Association I've seen an equally long struggle to confront traffic issues on our road.

Camden is a neighbourhood, not just a road and I have never seen it as fair that people can use our home as a rat run to save a few minutes on a journey across town. We are all being urged to do our bit to build cleaner, greener, less traffic congested cities. So many historic cities in Europe have done so much better than us.

We have all become so dependent on our cars and have not yet demanded of local councils that they provide really excellent public transport so that we can get where we want without using our cars.

I see this Council initiative as a real chance to improve our neighbourhood and throughout the city to lower the priority given to motorists.

We will all have to change our habits and get over any minor inconvenience in order to achieve a more sustainable and enjoyable way of life.

Janet, Prospect Place

Join our campaign by clicking on the website

Camden Residents' Association Bath
Making life better for those living on our roads in Camden

What it might be like in an 'LTN'

All the pictures of LTNs we could find were nothing like Camden at all so we have had to mainly resort to words and another picture from the past.



"Imagine Camden as a largely car-free road, perhaps with planted areas of flowers and trees, seats where we can sit and talk to neighbours, where people can cycle to work and play, where children can safely walk to school, and older people like me walk into town, where we can stroll in the evening and admire the view over Bath". This is from a much loved, long-time resident here who still would like to see Camden change.

BUZZING SHOPS AT CLAREMONT

This year, we've lost Camden Coffee but from the setting of the Rising Sun pub has dawned the Claremont, transformed by Daniel and his wife into an intriguing and welcoming place to meet from gam till 11pm. The Community Centre is also running a cafe several times each week.

There are however several empty shop units which it would be great to see thriving again. Many of us living halfway up the hill would support these as simply contouring along a quietened Camden Road would be much easier and more pleasant than dropping down to the London Road or the city centre.



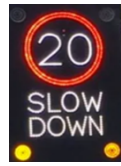
Close to there is what I call 'the shelf', across the road from Stanley Villas This proves to be a spellbinding place for visitors to get their first view over Bath or for the cognoscenti to get a free view of the fireworks on the Rec in November! How much nicer this would be without the continual traffic contention caused by impatient drivers negotiating their way through the chicanes?

Whilst we are talking about the shops, we are most grateful again to Andrews and their Louise for generously printing this

newsletter each year which takes three hours of machine time to do.

Andrews ➤

RESPECTFUL DRIVERS



At present, our studies have proved that 60% of drivers speed along Camden Road. If traffic was blocked from rat running through NE Bath by a bus gate then most drivers would be bus-drivers, maybe taxis, and occasional residents who should be far more respectful of the neighbourhood and stick to the speed limit. Maybe it should be lower than 20mph? At 10mph it only takes 2 minutes longer to make a journey into or out of Camden and the stopping distance halves to a reassuring 20 feet. A bus journey along the length of Camden Road would take 4 minutes longer in theory and less in practice if the road was quieter anyway – could we buy that?

HEDGEMEAD AND CAMDEN CRESCENT

As you come into Bath by train from the east Camden Crescent is the only crescent passengers get to see. How majestic it looks above the greenery of Hedgemoor Park's mature trees. What they can't see are the threatening junctions on Lansdown Road and Lower Hedgemoor Road and the recklessly driven traffic driving in front of it.

Walking into town via either of these junctions is just about safe for seasoned users but are extremely challenging to our many visitors – nothing like the Royal Crescent or even Lansdown Crescent. All the viewpoints in Camden could be so much quieter and more pleasant without the through traffic.

CLEAN STREET

Some recently arrived residents have observed how dirty and poorly kempt Camden appears. Mechanised cleaning by the council is difficult with so much parking and manual cleaning by our local heroes is pretty hazardous even with a 'gilet jaune' on. This could be a lot easier for our merry band of street wardens with less, low speeding traffic.

Debra and her family reckon that if the street looked better 'cared for', everyone passing would respect it more and keep it like that. Most people probably think she's right.

MEETING AND TALKING

The most appreciated blog post we've ever done is of the day we awoke to a massive overnight dump of snow.

Camden Road was so busy but so quiet. Just gentle chats and greetings and the scraping of snow shovels on the pavements. I think that moment gave us the best insight into Camden Road becoming a street – somewhere we frequently meet and have a gentle chat or even congregate.



We currently get glimpses of that sort of experience, but only when there is a temporary lull in the traffic.

SAFE PASSAGE

When we first moved to Prospect Place we suddenly discovered how threatening it felt on a narrow pavement with virtually no protection. Getting onto a bike outside our front gate was pretty much impossible – drivers give us no quarter at all.

You'd expect to feel safe walking behind a row of cars but one accident this year pushed a resident's large 4x4 parked car across a pavement and into the gateway of the adjacent house. So, no one is very safe with things as they are.



If we minimised the frantic peak time traffic and 'off peak' speeding by adapting the CAZ cameras to also be a busgate then how much safer would we be?

TO FIND OUT MORE

SEE WHAT WE'VE SAID ON THESE TOPICS...

accident air quality BreAtHe
buses bus gate campaign CAZ Christmas
Class Congestion CycleBath Cycling
election Electric Cycling FoBRA Fun galls
Hedgemoor Park holistic hustling illegal
Larkhall Transition leadership litter
picking low traffic neighbourhood
parking pedestrianised
pollution public health
question time Rat FUN Richmond Arms
safety Speeding traffic traffic levels
transport travel UNESCO visionary
walk with Wild Camden zone 15

You'll find several articles on our web-site. You can search for them using the tag cloud on each page.

AGM

Date for your diary
AGM, Thurs 21st November, 19:30
Claremont Centre, Eatbourne Ave

Elections

Our committee has 10 people on it. Our very longstanding secretary is standing down so we need a new recruit for her.

Of the other six committee members we know three are standing down. I get ever more convinced that amongst our 1,000 residents there is a rich mine of talent and expertise on the street which we could tap into at this really exciting time for our locality. Please do consider standing.

The closing date for putting yourself forward is 14/11/19 for the AGM on 21/11/19. Just apply to the Committee Secretary, Janet Anderson by email at janetandtonyanderson@talktalk.net or ring Jeremy, Chair, for a chat on 07966 717013.

Here are some answers to people's first response to getting asked about this.

Frequently asked questions:

1. Is it a 'life sentence'?

No, you just commit to serving for one year. We have potentially over 1000 residents out there so there should be no shortage of talent if you were to step down.

2. I don't like committees!

If they achieve very little then we can understand that. We do achieve tangible results and in so doing learn a lot about how to get things done in a local democracy.

3. I can't commit much time.

That's okay. We meet every two months or so and each of us takes responsibility for one activity or mini project – that's all.

4. I'm not sure what use I'll be?

We often have hidden transferable skills and experience or have relevant hobbies – you'd be surprised!

5. I'm not here much

That's okay – there are probably quite a few like you and we need to represent all types of residents and need to understand your perspective. With modern communications much can be achieved without meeting in person all that much.

6. Do we have fun?

Yes, we try to! Clearing snow and gritting in times of need is pretty rewarding. Working together to make local democracy work is quite fun too. This coming year could be very exciting for those living on our street. We need your help.

Agenda

Arguably this year presents us with more serious issues than even the residents' parking zone 10 years ago. The CAZ will not reduce traffic and we're now engaging with the new administration to find a new way of restricting the use of vehicles in Camden and in NE Bath generally.

At our AGM we hope to have:

- Councillor Joanna Wright, Joint Cabinet Member for Transport
- Councillor Richard Samuel, Cabinet Member for Resources, and Deputy Leader, as well as Walcot councillor
- Councillor Tom Davies, Walcot councillor.
- Councillors Lucy Hodge and Mark Elliott from Lansdown.

To give us time to allow full debate we will have to conduct the formal business as quickly as possible at the beginning of the meeting so do please turn up promptly, or even early – we will be ready for you and there is plenty to read up on beforehand!

We really look forward to seeing you at this really important time for Camden. All the reports and so on will be available in advance on the AGM section of our website, as last year.

Here's the likely agenda.

1	Welcome and Introductions	19:30
2	Chairman's Report	19:35
3	Treasurer's Report	19:50
4	Election of Officers and Committee Members	19:55
5	Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN) for NE Bath Discussion	20:10
6	Indication of support for an LTN from those gathered	21:15
7	Final Summary and election announcement	21:20
8	Finish	21:30
10	Drinks at the Claremont	21:30

Other news

Nigel Pollard, Treasurer of the newly formed Friends of Hedgemoor Park

We've got a national 'Green Flag Award' and we congratulate the Council for all their input and hard work in gaining it which we must sustain to retain our 'annual' award!

We are hoping for some information boards to help inform both residents and visitors of its remarkable history, as well as some documenting of the wealth of trees and wildlife in the park.



At this summer's 130th Anniversary party and after a forty-year absence there was a band in the bandstand along with much other jollity and drama.



Membership of HPF is just £5 year. If you are interested in the park, the Friends are still looking for members, so please sign up and help to plan its exciting future at

friendsofhedgemoorpark@gmail.com.

Caroline reports that the anomalous unrestricted parking on Upper Hedgemoor Road will be incorporated into RPZ 15 this autumn/winter. Yellow lines will be redrawn to allow wider access for emergency vehicles.

The Council state that the repairs to the Camden Crescent arches are planned for this financial year and we are aiming to ensure that access to the whole area is improved after the work culminates.

Having recently met his local councillor on site, **Chris** reports that we should not expect the lack of safety on the 6-way Lansdown Road junction to be addressed in the short term by the Council. However, we'll try and get some small sensible measures into any Low Traffic Neighbourhood planning we can influence.

Keep up to date.
Please subscribe to our website at
www.camdenresidentsbath.org