

The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park

Oct-Nov 2007

This edition is being circulated to all West Park residents, and not just to members of WPRA.

Victory for Commonsense in Welburn Avenue

Following a site visit by the Planning Inspectorate on 1st October concerning the proposal to build a detached house on a site on Welburn Avenue, the Inspector's report has upheld the Council's original decision which rejected the planning application.

Overall this seems to be a victory for commonsense. West Park is a pleasant area to live in for families, older people and young couples, and it has a good range and mix of housing.

There's no fundamental objection to changes or developments of properties in the West Park area, but these ought to respect the character of their surroundings. This proposal failed to do that.



Thanks to all residents who took the time to send in objections, and who turned up in person for the visit by the Appeal Inspector.

Other Planning News

WPRA attended another marathon Plans Panel West session on Thursday (1-11-07) that lasted from 1.30 pm to beyond 6pm.

Again local councillors demonstrated their desire to ensure that new developments are sympathetic to the area in which they are to take place.

Discussions focussed especially on whether developments were over-intensive, comparable in character and density with surrounding properties, and whether they conflicted with Design Statements.

Discussion of Spenfield House (Otley Road) was postponed for a later panel meeting, but the plans for a 483 student flat development

by Leeds Metropolitan University on Beckett Park were approved.

According to information provided by the University as part of the deliberation process, it will undertake to use the new accommodation primarily for overseas students and those students who are taught on the campus.



These students will also be asked to sign an undertaking not to bring cars to Leeds.

There were also discussions about releasing 'section 106 monies' which could be used to set up resident parking schemes at an early stage. This might have an affect on the parking problems mentioned below.

Local Parking Issues

Background

For many years students from the Beckett Park campus of Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU) have tended to park their cars in the surrounding streets. Eventually as

numbers increased this overspill parking led to residents' parking schemes in the Churchwoods, the Drummonds, and the Beckett Parks.

►continued overleaf



Predictably, these schemes shifted the overspill into other streets such as Glen Road, Harrowby Road and Ancaster Road.

Meanwhile other contributions to on-street parking problems come from Richmond House School and commuters using streets in the area for unofficial park-and-ride.

Then LMU Made it Worse...

All this was bad enough, but in August this year the University launched its new Traffic Management Scheme. Suddenly staff had to pay for their parking places and students and visitors had to use a pay-and-display car park.

The result was a deluge of parked cars into Harrowby Road and Ancaster Road. In effect LMU dumped their on-campus parking problems onto their residential neighbours.

Over 200 cars have been counted parked in these two streets, with driveways obstructed, grass verges parked on, and increased risk for drivers and especially pedestrians.

What's To Be Done?

Many residents have contacted local councillors and WPRA about excessive on-street parking and discussions are currently taking place between local councillors and Council traffic engineers about ways of resolving it.

Unfortunately there are no simple solutions but inevitably this has raised the question of whether to extend residents' parking schemes even further.

Experience shows that when residents' parking schemes are introduced, parking problems move on to affect other areas.

After the Churchwoods and Drummonds scheme was introduced, drivers began to park in Glen Road before walking all the way up Churchwood Avenue to LMU.

It seems clear that any scheme in West Park would have to extend beyond just the Harrowby and Ancaster areas otherwise nuisance parking would simply shift into



Kepstorn Road and into the Northholme area adjacent to the West Park fields. In turn, restricting parking in these areas might then move the problem on to Spen Road or other streets in the Edwardian sector of West Park.

Pros and Cons

Residents not yet affected might wonder what all the fuss is about. It's easy to see parking schemes as just a nuisance. After all you lose the flexibility to park where you want, and using permits can be annoying.

On the other hand, not becoming part of a wider scheme now could leave residents saddled with possible future parking problems for quite a long time. These schemes can cost in excess of £30,000 to install and so it's not easy to get the money to extend existing schemes or to set up new ones.

Something certainly needs to be done to resolve the current problem; but people can rest assured that any parking scheme would be set up only after public consultation.

The section after the box describes how the residents' parking scheme worked out in the Churchwoods and the Drummonds.

Residents' Parking Schemes

- One permit per car registered at the address, plus one visitor permit. Permits must be displayed in cars parked on the street.
- Some roads have 'Residents Only' signs at the road entrance and on lampposts, but without additional road markings. Others have boxes marked on the road for use by residents. Restrictions apply from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday.
- Residents are encouraged to park on their drives whenever possible, and to share permits with neighbours for special events.
- Visitors' vehicles can be registered in advance of any special event during restricted hours.
- So far permits have been free of charge for both initial issue and renewal (after 3 years). A lost permit costs £10 to replace.
- Council enforcement officers can issue fixed-penalty tickets to unauthorised car owners. The penalty is £30, increasing to £60 if not paid within the specified time.

The Churchwood / Drummonds Parking Scheme



Prior to the parking scheme many residents lobbied local councillors complaining about the inconsiderate or nuisance parking which was occurring – with cars

parked across drive entrances or obstructing driveways, insufficient space left for cars to manoeuvre safely, and traffic congestion from the reduction in road width caused by parking.

The residents' parking scheme was installed after a public consultation exercise by Drummond and Churchwood Residents

Association (DCRA) to collect the opinions of all residents about how to deal with the parking problems. It has now been in operation for three years. The Council and the University contributed to the cost of setting up the scheme and there was no cost to the residents.

From discussions with DCRA we gather that the scheme is working well and has alleviated the nuisance parking. Obviously some level of unauthorised parking will still occur. However car ownership, parking, and traffic congestion are always contentious issues so there's no guarantee that all residents are equally happy with it.

West Park Centre

The Association has written to the City Services Department (Enforcement) regarding the unacceptable level of litter which has built up on both sides of the West Park Centre.

STEP (Supporting The Elderly People)

The STEP Christmas Fayre will be held on December 1st at St Andrew's church between 11 am and 2 pm.



The Next WPRA Committee Meeting



The next WPRA Committee meeting will be in early December. If you have particular concerns or any issues you feel the Association can assist with, please get in touch.

Lawnswood School

So far this year, there seem to have been fewer problem incidents involving school children. If you do need to report an incident, here's how to do it.

Reporting an Incident

1. Phone the School on 0113 2844020 and describe:
 - What happened
 - When and where it took place
 - Appearance of the individuals, apparent age, type and colour of clothing, anything distinctive.
2. If you've already reported it to the police, give the School the police log number or incident number.
3. Ask the School to give you a reference number for your complaint. (They have agreed to do this).
4. Ring to inform WPRA. This helps us to build up a complete picture of what's happening, and is extremely useful in discussions with the Police or the School.

Are You Receiving Your WPRA Email Circulars?

Usually each month we send out two or three circulars by email to about 180 members who have sent us their email addresses. Email users currently represent about two thirds of the total membership. The circulars deal with local issues and, for example, have provided an excellent way

of alerting members to contentious planning applications or appeals. It's not practical to do this in any other way so email has increased the effectiveness of the association.

Roughly 5% of the messages bounce back as 'undeliverable'. There are many possible reasons for this, including being a Hotmail user (see box), but if you are a member with email and you're not receiving the circulars, please let us know at westpra@btinternet.com.

We already post copies of The Chronicle on the WPRA website. Soon we hope to do the same with circulars so that those having problems receiving them by email will still be able to read them.

Calling Hotmail Users...

If you use a free Hotmail address, there's a strong chance that WPRA circulars, plus some emails from other sources, will never reach you. Hotmail have become notoriously over-enthusiastic at 'bouncing' emails that might conceivably be spam. Hotmail accounts are useful as 'disposable' email addresses, but an email account with your Internet Service Provider (ISP) is likely to be more reliable for most purposes.

Don't forget to check the website regularly for the latest local news

Have You Tried the WPRA Website Yet?

The WPRA website, at www.westparkresidents.org.uk, has clocked up nearly 4,000 hits and it now shows up in Wikipedia and Google. During the coming year we plan to set up a Bulletin Board facility for members. Any other suggestions for content or facilities will be most welcome.

How to Join the West Park Residents Association

If you've recently moved into the area, or have not been a member of WPRA before, maybe you'd like to join? The fee is a mere £3.00 per household. The subscription year is from one AGM to the next (effectively April to April).

Just fill in the form below or send the equivalent information, together with the fee to: WPRA Treasurer, 26 Ring Road, West Park, Leeds, LS16 6EJ.

The West Park Chronicle

Articles, news or letters from local residents are most welcome for the next edition; please contact the editor, Doug Kemp via the website



I / We enclose £3, being my / our subscription to the West Park Residents Association for the year 2007/8. If you require a receipt, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Please make cheques payable to: **Spen Lane and West Park Residents Association**.

NAME _____

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Please return this slip and your payment to: Treasurer, 26 Ring Road, West Park, Leeds, LS16 6EJ.