

# The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park

Special Edition—Jan 2008

## This is a Special Edition of the Chronicle Focusing on Local Parking Issues

*During the past year parking in Headingley and West Park has become a hot topic. Decisions by Leeds Metropolitan University to minimise parking on their campus led to a flood of extra cars parking in the surrounding streets making an already difficult situation much worse for local residents. In this document we attempt to put things in perspective and to describe what West Park Residents Association (WPRAs) is doing and has been doing on behalf of members.*

### 'This Doesn't Affect Me' ... Wrong!



It's true that parking problems mostly affect Headingley and that only a relatively small area of West Park is currently affected.

However on some days over 200 cars have been counted parking on the streets of West Park close to the entrance to the University. The affected streets include the top end of Harrowby Road, Harrowby Crescent, and Ancaster Road near to the junction with Harrowby Road.

For residents the result is that driveways have been obstructed, grass verges parked on, general road safety for drivers and pedestrians has been adversely affected, and service vehicles have been unable to gain access to the area. Even wheelie-bin collection has not always been possible for some houses.

Resolving this problem will inevitably shift parking into other areas. So, if you live on or in the streets off Kepstorn Road, *you are affected.*

Bear in mind that currently students are prepared to park in Glen Road and Weetwood Lane and then walk all the way to the Beckett Park campus. This is further than from the campus to the Northolmes next to West Park fields, so the Northolmes and the Helmsleys are almost certain to be affected in the future.

It is also quite likely that Weetwood Road, Darnley Road and the nearby Arncliffe Road area will be affected at some stage.

### Why So Many Extra Cars?

Over the years Leeds Metropolitan University (aka Leeds Met or LMU) has closed almost all the halls of residence on the Beckett Park campus.

The halls were converted into teaching resources, resulting in more students travelling onto the campus. In turn this has meant greater traffic and caused car parking to spill over into the closest residential areas.

The first areas affected were the Churchwood / Drummond's and the Beckett's. Here residents had to live with unregulated student parking for around five years prior to the setting up of residents parking schemes.

These schemes have parking areas that are reserved for residents only between 9 am and 6 pm on weekdays, thereby reducing the incidence of inconsiderate parking. Students can still park in certain designated bays, for instance on one side of Churchwood Avenue.



### Are They all From LMU?

Not all, but most are. Parking has been slowly increasing from commuters leaving cars on some streets such as Ancaster Road and Kepstorn Road, and then catching the bus into town. Other parking is associated with Richmond House School, especially on Glen Road and Ancaster Road. However parking from these sources is relatively small

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

compared to that from the university.

### **Benefits of Residents' Parking Schemes**

The advantage of Residents' Parking Schemes over say yellow lines is that they provide a balance between managing parking and protecting the 'rights' of residents, whereas yellow lines apply to all road users indiscriminately.

However parking schemes require careful planning and design or else they can end up merely shifting the problem into the next street or district.



Traffic Regulation Orders are involved, and together with signage, road marking, design work and legal costs, the total bill can add up to around £30,000. This money has to be budgeted for in Council plans.

### **Why Has the Ancaster / Harrowby Problem Surfaced Only Now?**

This autumn, the University launched a so-called Traffic Management plan to the campus. The plan:

- Charged staff for parking,
- Introduced Pay and Display for students and,
- Limited even further the number of parking spaces available to students.

Remarkably, there are only about 170 places for a student population in excess of 5,000. Essentially the University has dumped its over-spill car parking onto those streets of West Park closest to the campus.

### **Could the Problem Have Been Anticipated?**

Several years ago parking problems in the West Park area were predicted by the North West Transport Group, which includes representatives from local associations including the WPRA.

As a result, financial provision was planned for the year 2008/9 to allow for possible provision of a residents' parking scheme in West Park. However the LMU's plans to clear parking from their campus made the problem

much worse than had been anticipated.

### **Do the Authorities Know About the Current Problem?**



Not surprisingly, affected residents in the Ancaster/Harrowby area reacted angrily to the chaos on their streets. Local councillors, council officials, and WPRA have been inundated with letters and email complaints from affected residents.

The result is that the problem is definitely recognised as such, and all parties are working at trying to find appropriate solutions.

### **What's Been Done So Far?**

- After lobbying by councillors the police have been very responsive in ticketing 'illegal' parking such as parking at junctions, obstruction, etc..
- Yellow-line restrictions on some streets have been discussed as an interim measure to resolve access problems.

The police action is welcome but limited in terms of its effectiveness, and yellow lines could only be a temporary measure which would probably lead to parking on streets not currently affected. There are also limitations as to how far any temporary measure can be applied.

### **Will a Permanent Solution be Forthcoming?**

The answer is 'yes'; the need for something to be done is accepted. The Council's Highways section, who are responsible for the design and implementation of parking schemes, is examining possible solutions.

It's important to recognise that this is not simply a West Park issue. The solution will have to address current parking problems in the Glen Road and Weetwood Lane area, plus certain streets off Queenswood Drive. There is also likely to be a review of existing residents' schemes together with discussions with the University regarding its parking provisions.

### **How Long Will it Take?**

Setting up parking regulations requires defined protocols to be followed. These proce-

dures dictate the time-scale. A lot depends on the scheme's complexity, and on issues that may arise from public consultations, but it's anticipated that a scheme can be introduced over the summer period.

### Will There be Public Consultation?

Yes— feedback from affected residents forms part of the process in setting up residents' parking schemes and Highways will inform residents of proposals. Residents directly affected by proposals for temporary yellow-lining have already received information from Highways.



### Should I Email or Write to Highways or Local Councillors?

For obstruction caused by parked vehicles, residents should contact the police using the non-emergency number 0845 6060606.

For vehicles parked on yellow-lines, this is the responsibility of Parking Services, who can be contacted on 0113 395 0050.

Whether to contact Highways about this particular issue is your decision, but do please consider the pros and cons.

When an official department receives a high volume of correspondence about an issue, it's a useful indication that the issue is important.



On the other hand preparing detailed replies to many letters about the same thing can tie-up resources that would probably be better spent on achieving a solution.

So if/when you send suggestions or complaints to council officers it's a good idea to:

- Itemise the main points and
- Make the letter as concise and easy to read as possible,

That way the recipient can extract the salient points quickly and efficiently and our council taxes will be more efficiently used.

The same applies to letters to local councillors. Complaints that require long and involved replies can be counter-productive if they take up a disproportionate amount of the working time of councillors or officials.

### Is a Public Meeting Planned?

WPRA has offered to organise a meeting for *all* residents, but after discussing this with various interested parties the general opinion is that it is too early to do this.

A meeting now would probably end up focusing only on the bad experiences of some, and the possibility of parking affecting others. It seems better to delay any meeting until there is a clearer idea of likely time-scales and possible plans.

### What Else is WPRA Doing?

As should be the case, the residents most affected by these parking problems have been quick to make their problems known to councillors and others without any organised prompting.



WPRA has, in the past and now, lobbied appropriate parties regarding this issue. WPRA will continue to do so, and will respond to any suggestions from residents.

We distributed the October/November Chronicle to all residents, members and non-members, in the areas likely to be affected so as to build awareness of the issues. Similarly this Special Edition is going out to all residents in the area from West Park fields up to Ancaster Road.

Apologies for any repetitions in this edition, but it's important that local residents are aware of the implications of what is happening at present.

### Interim Conclusions

From recent discussions with councillors and Highways, WPRA is firmly of the view that:

- Solutions will be found which allow an acceptable level of parking within the West Park area for residents and other car users.
- The will is there to ensure that any scheme is likely to be in place as soon as is feasible.

It's a pity, but it seems inevitable that these arrangements will involve more cars being parked on certain streets in the area than was previously the case. On the other hand the

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

currently unacceptable excesses will be curbed.

### For Further Information

The last two editions of the Chronicle contained further information on the same issues dealt with here. They are available on the Association Website [www.westparkresidents.org.uk](http://www.westparkresidents.org.uk).

The website also displays photographs showing examples of some of these current parking issues and there's also a dedicated discussion forum where members can post their points of view.

*The Bulletin Board on the website is now working. Why not try it out at [www.westparkresidents.org.uk](http://www.westparkresidents.org.uk)?*

### 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, but if you are a member with email and you're not receiving the circulars, please let us know at [westpra@btinternet.com](mailto:westpra@btinternet.com).

We post copies of circulars and The Chronicle on the WPRA website so that those having problems receiving them by email will still be able to read them.

### How to Join the West Park Residents Association

The fee is £3.00 per household. Anyone joining now will be paid-up until April 2009. (The subscription year runs 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. (Re-subscription forms for existing members will be going out in Feb/March).

.....  
I / We enclose £3, being my / our subscription to the West Park Residents Association for the year 2008. If you require a receipt, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

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

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE :

TELEPHONE:

EMAIL ADDRESS :