

The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park

October 2008

Special edition for distribution in the Ancaster, Kepstorn and Helmsley areas

'Leeds Metropolitan West Park Car Park'

Since LMU dumped its car parking onto the surrounding streets, the area has been so badly affected that some now refer to the area as the 'LMU West Park Car Park'.

The district has been transformed from a pleasant and quiet residential haven into a set of linear car parks with every space in great demand and where cars roam around to find them.

As well as sheer loss of amenity around their homes, residents have to contend with blocked driveways, blocked access for emergency services, lack of access for window cleaners, tradesmen, and delivery vans. If you've not experienced the effects yet, imagine having an urgent appointment to keep, plane to catch, kids to collect from school, etc., only to find that your car is trapped in your drive.



Draft Proposals Now Available

Leeds Highways department has now issued its draft proposals for dealing with these issues. Disappointingly for many households in the area, the plan does not include a resident's parking scheme. Instead, it relies on shuffling around the yellow lines that were introduced as an interim measure.

According to the council, the cost of a residents' parking scheme can only be justified officially if the congestion denies residents the ability to park. They point out that in this case the majority of houses have drives and off-street parking so that this does not apply. In these circumstances the best they feel empowered to do is to apply parking restrictions with yellow lines with the aim merely of keeping the streets open to traffic flow.



The Proposals

Double yellow lines will prevent parking at any time, and single yellow lines will prevent parking between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm. Streets will also have limited sections which are unlined and available for anyone to park in, although almost inevitably these will be commandeered by students and staff of Leeds Met and rendered unavailable for your visitors. The restrictions are being proposed for the streets south of Kepstorn Road, and will reduce current parking spaces even more.

Kepstorn and Helmsley's Next

The reduction in car parking space will spread the problem even more widely. Kepstorn Road is likely to be affected, and also the Helmsley's and the section of Harrowby Road which leads to the fields.

As residents in the Ancaster area will tell you, this can mean someone parking across your drive despite the fact that such obstruction is illegal. Pavements may be obstructed, and there will be cars cruising around looking for available parking spaces.

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Will This Affect Me?

While you may think you are too far away to be affected, this may not be the case. Already car parking has been blocking access along Glen Road and Weetwood Lane. This is quite a distance from the campus. It seems only a matter of time before students realise it's closer to park on say Northholme Avenue and then walk across to the campus.

Look at the Plans

If you live in the area which has not been circulated with the details from Highways, you really ought to look on the Association web-site www.westparkresidents.org.uk/tro.php to see what's being considered.

Also go and look at Ancaster Road or Harrowby Road during a weekday to see the problem. Even if you are normally out during the day it can still affect you. The cars may well still be there when you get home.

WPRA's View

The Association had talks with a Highways representative on 30th September, but it seems clear that there's no substitute for direct comments from residents about how the issues affect their own particular location.

The Association intends to ask local councillors for a public meeting as, if implemented, these draft proposals will lead to a change of character of a large part of West Park. We'll report on this later but we felt it was important to let you know what is happening now.

It seems remarkable that there's no ultimate authority able to stop Leeds Metropolitan University dumping all its on-site parking onto (what were) the quiet residential streets surrounding its campus. It's doubtful that a commercial firm would be allowed to get away with it, so why should a so-called 'seat of learning' be able to do it?

While the Association considers how best to lobby appropriate parties, it really is important that you as local residents make your views known to the council.

Whatever the plans propose it is unlikely that they will be to everyone's approval. Perhaps the real sadness in this whole issue is that the neighbourhood will be permanently damaged.



Time to Be Heard

So far the proposals are in draft form and the Highways department is still open to comments and suggestions on what is being proposed.

Now is the time for residents to look at the plans and submit comments.

Highways expect changes to be made based on your comments so it's *vital* that residents make their views known on these plans.

Contact details are in the box.

Contacting Highways Department

- Write in by letter or email
- Quote reference TMW-32-1169
- The email address is: headingley.tro@leeds.gov.uk
- The postal address is: Attn. Richard Ellis, Highways Services, Selectapost 6, Ring Road, Middleton, Leeds LS10