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Subject: Newsletter from Bloomsbury Residents Action Group (BRAG)

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Bloomsbury Residents' Action Group

BRAG

Residents matter!

Dear Debbie,

Happy New Year and welcome to the first of BRAG's newsletters for 2018 that will be published over the coming months to give the community feedback and information about various issues that may be of interest.

Bloomsbury – ensuring it's a place for residents



We formed BRAG in 2016 to be a campaigning group with the battle cry that “Residents Matter.” But we are aware that for a community to function at its best, there is a need to retain residents, of all ages, backgrounds and incomes in the neighbourhood we call home. We do not want to be driven out by developers, policy makers or the price of a bar of soap.

It is all too easy for inner city enclaves to be dominated by big business and big money but neither genuinely enrich the quality of life for those who live here. The challenge is to attract new residents into this important heritage area with affordable housing that supports a sustaining society, focused on enhancing the quality of life for every resident.

CA-D Zone Parking consultation



In November 2017 a letter was sent out to local groups for comments on potential changes to parking in the CA-D zone, south of the Euston Road. A meeting was also held on 18 December, which was attended by about 10 local people, including residents of Lamb's Conduit Street, Mecklenburgh Square, Thanet Street, Judd Street and Wicklow Street. Brenda Busingye and Sam Margolis were there from Camden Council.

The exercise was intended to inform the nature of the questions that will be included in the wider consultation to be carried out in early 2018. We are assured that the current review excludes single yellow line and paid for parking only bays - which will stay as they are; ie no parking 8.30-18.30 Mon-Fri and 8.30-13.30 Sat. The review offers the opportunity to address other matters related to CPZ hours of control that have been previously raised; including the request for 24 hour restrictions from some areas.

It emerged from the meeting on 18 December that some people thought that resident bays being operative for 24 hours a day (rather than 8.30-18-30 as now) would be better, especially in areas where they have a problem of incoming evening parking; however other residents were clear that they did not want any changes as more restrictions would make it more difficult for their visitors to park. So, as part of the CPZ review, the Council will consider introducing subzones which would have different hours of control, according to local need and wishes. Where there is an area that supports different controls from the rest of the CPZ, we have been told these could be implemented without affecting neighbouring areas who don't wish to have the different controls.

The proposal for dual-use bays would be considered in the context of Camden's Transport Strategy Objectives which aim to prioritise measures for more sustainable modes of travel and discourage inessential car use. A change in the type of parking bay would be subject to a statutory consultation which would be undertaken separately.

To ensure a comprehensive consultation response it was confirmed that letters to consultees will be addressed to the occupier of a specific unit as available on Camden's LPG postal database.

So please look out for a postal consultation leaflet coming your way; think about whether there is any need for change in your area, and whether the suggested increase in restricted parking hours would make things better or worse – AND MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN.

Both at the meeting on the 18 December and in correspondence with Camden, BRAG has been emphasising the point that many thousands of residents live in the CA-D area; and that they are a cross-section of the community (young, old, able-bodied, families with children, disabled, small businesses and self-employed people relying on their transport etc) who have normal needs for transport, ambulances, deliveries etc. We accept that there have to be restrictions in central London but we want Camden to recognise that we are seeking a balance which recognises residents' needs for access to vehicles in varying degrees for ordinary day-to day life.

Judd Street Open Space



Camden Council will be investing a modest sum (approx £70,000) into the small park on Judd Street (formerly known as Bramber Green). As a first step the Council has been asking local residents and businesses for their ideas and opinions on how the area of open space might be improved.

Topics for discussion included:

- Improve entrances by removing fencing and high shrubs on Cromer Street and Judd Street
- Add a second entrance on Judd Street
- Open up south east entrances for easier access
- Move play area - swings for toddlers on central lawn may not be best use of this area
- A children's play area on the lawn near the rock might displace disruptive anti-social behaviour
- Introduce a path around the outside of the park, with exercise stations
- Add benches to the Dog Run to encourage wider use
- Remove seating by central tree; remove one set of railings and replace shrubs with lawn
- Renovate the maintenance hut which is in poor condition.

The consultation is being coordinated by Shape Landscape Architects, led by Richard Peckham (rpeckham2@btinternet.com, 07876 255777). Joe Lewis is Camden's Green Space Project Officer (joe.lewis@camden.gov.uk 07876 745481).

The first informal public engagement took place on Thursday 30th November, 12noon - 4pm and Saturday 2nd December, 1pm – 3pm. This provided Shape with an opportunity to hear what local residents had to say. We have been told they learned a lot about the area and how the park is used / might be used in future through these conversations (over 60 of them). The results will inform the plan currently being developed.

The next engagement day is likely to be held early in February 2018 and Shape will provide a summary of responses from the December consultation days, so residents can see how these tie in with the proposals.

A similar public engagement exercise, involving Joe Lewis and Richard Peckham of Shape, has taken place in Argyle Square and the play space on Wicklow Street.

Pedestrianisation of Oxford Street West



There has been a second consultation by TfL on the proposed transformation of Oxford Street. This focused on the Mayor of London and Westminster Council's proposals for banning traffic in the section of Oxford Street between Orchard Street and Regent Street (Selfridges to John Lewis). The plans will divert Oxford Street traffic through neighbouring areas and more taxi ranks will be moved to side streets. Cycling will also be banned on Oxford Street.

The closing date for responses was 3 January 2018 and BRAG submitted a written submission in opposition to the proposals.

BRAG thinks that the reasons being put forward for pedestrianising Oxford Street West are not well founded and do not justify this change with its probable detrimental impact. Our particular concerns focused on

- Residents in surrounding streets
- Pollution
- People with impaired mobility
- Ordinary shoppers, be they local or tourists

The proposed Oxford Street pedestrianisation resonates with our publicly articulated concerns about Tavistock Place: one cleaned-up street is achieved at the expense of more pollution for residents in adjacent streets. And how are ordinary people meant to get around?

The consultation document declares its intention to '*Begin to establish Oxford Street as a place for people rather than traffic...*' . *for people rather than traffic...*' . However, this is a transport planning concept often used without proper thought as to what it actually means. To enable people to get around – especially those with particular difficulties – people often need transport.

We are supportive of sustainable alternatives and especially the introduction of low emission transport – which London is rightly working towards. But the reality is that not everyone can walk the length of Oxford Street carrying heavy parcels, and a well-ordered, civilised society should take account of this and provide transport.

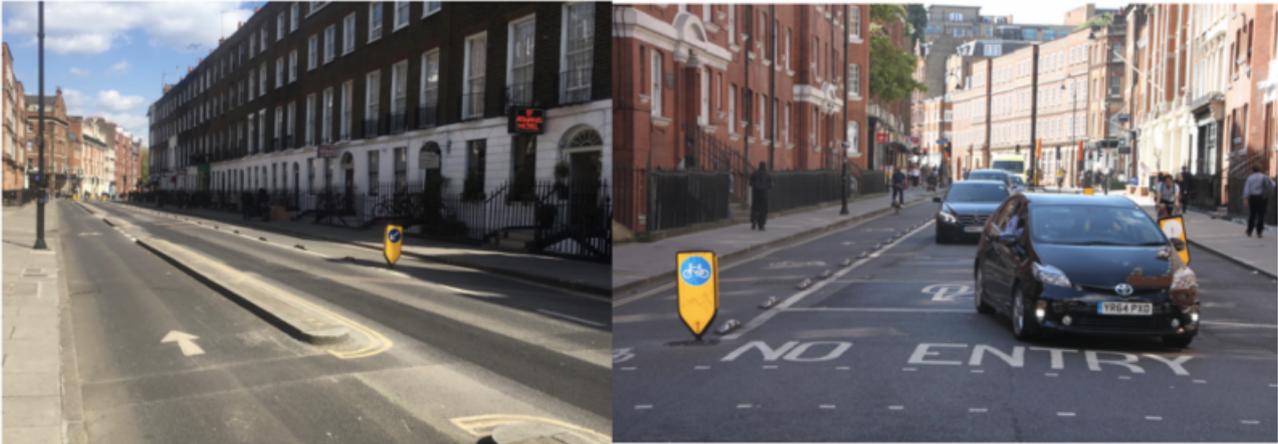
It is not a matter of people OR transport; but rather that people NEED transport.

We have subsequently learned about the campaign group, [Better Oxford Street](#), which was formed in June 2016 by a number of West End amenity groups in order to spell out the drastic affect pedestrianisation would have on all the areas surrounding Oxford Street. We agree that its consequences would be felt not just in a single part of the West End, but all of it, across Marylebone, Mayfair, Fitzrovia, Soho, Bloomsbury and beyond.

The consultation responses from a number of local groups can be accessed by [this link](#)

The London Taxi Drivers Association has also formed its own campaign — Open Oxford Street — to keep Oxford Street open and accessible to all.

Tavistock Place Public Inquiry – the Inspector’s Report



As most of you know, a Public Inquiry on the Torrington Place to Tavistock Place Traffic Order was held over a four week period, from Tuesday 10th October 2017 to Thursday 2nd November 2017, in the Council Chamber of Camden Town Hall in Judd Street. The independent Inspector, Martin Elliott, is now in the process of writing his report, which the Council expects to receive sometime in January or February 2018.

We have been assured that the Inspector’s Report will be published on the Council’s website as soon as possible after it is received by Camden.

Following receipt of an email from David Joyce, Camden’s Director of Regeneration and Planning, we have requested clarification of his reference to ‘fact-checking’, which is an exercise that will apparently be carried out prior to publication. BRAG has written to the Council to ask for clarification on what ‘fact-checking’ of the report will mean.

The essential principle we are seeking is that none of the parties involved in the Inquiry should have the right to change the report before publication and that the Inspector himself must sign off the final independent report.

We understand that following receipt of the Inspector’s Report, Camden Council’s Cabinet will make a final decision on the future of the Tavistock Place corridor.

Camden and Lumen Poetry



Camden and Lumen Poetry

London Poetry Project Supporting the Cold Weather Shelters

As a change from contentious traffic issues, we would like to pass on information about the local London Poetry Project.

Poetry evenings are held on the third Tuesday of every month (except August) at the Lumen Church, Tavistock Place, and all of the money raised goes to support cold weather shelters for the homeless.

There is an organised programme of readers each month. Readers from the floor are also invited to read one of their poems, which creates a wonderful relaxed atmosphere for both professional and novice readers to share their poetry.

The address for the Lumen events is: Lumen United Reformed Church, [88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS](#). More details can be accessed on <https://camdenlumen.wordpress.com/>

Camden 2025 – join the conversations



The Council has embarked on an engagement process to create a new Plan for Camden for the next seven years – called **Camden 25**. This is set to be finalised in February 2018, so time is running out to make your views heard.

There is a website www3.camden.gov.uk/camden2025/ where residents are encouraged to simply add their own comments. The link to the comments page is here - <https://dialogue.camden.gov.uk/camden-2025-home/>. You have to register first, which requires verifying your email address.

You can filter the comments in the comment boxes by themes by clicking on the highlighted words in the opening paragraph e.g. “a great place to grow up in”, “safe streets and communities”, “everyone feels a part of” etc. You can click on any comment box to see more detail on what other residents have said. To

add your own comment simply click on the tab "Ad Idea". You can leave as many comments as you want on anything you like. We understand the deadline is the end of January.

Email camden2025@camden.gov.uk if you have any questions or want to find out more.

BRAG update



Nicky Coates has recently stepped down as BRAG's Chair (although she remains on the Committee) and as the in-coming Chair I'm aware it's a hard act to follow!

Nicky has been a fantastic team leader, and I would like to thank her – on behalf of the rest of the Committee and other BRAG supporters - for her outstanding campaigning work, especially during the Tavistock Place Public Inquiry.

Do please pass on this newsletter to friends and neighbours, and we would like to encourage local residents to join BRAG, so please visit the website <http://www.brag.org.uk/> and click the JOIN BRAG button to be put on our mail-out database.

Thank you for all your support in recent months.

We wish everyone in the neighbourhood a happy, healthy and peaceful 2018.

Best wishes

Debbie Radcliffe

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Visit our website



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