

Sustained objection to the proposals for parking restrictions in Bassett Heath Avenue and Saxholm Way.

13 DEC 2010

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10 December 2010

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Southampton City Council
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Dear Miss Donawa

Firstly thank you for your recent visit to Bassett Heath Avenue and Saxholm Way. I trust that you managed to beat the modern phenomenon traffic from the school run.

As you mentioned Councillor Samuels in conversation I am copying this letter to him. He will, I assume, remember supporting the community, as he always has done regardless of political differences, with the change of the entrance for the Sir Richard Newitt Hall development from onto Saxholm Way to off The Avenue. The main issue regarding Saxholm Way was the "brow" on the hill and the weather in winter and I venture to suggest that any argument accepted by the authorities in the past remains valid. I must also mention that visibility exiting onto the Avenue from the development is considerably easier than either Saxholm Way or Bassett Heath Avenue because of the hedges, the telephone junction box, pedestrians and cyclists. Changing the yellow lines will not affect this situation either way.

Obviously I cannot comment on other roads but in conversation with others your comments regarding parking to avoid the extortionate City parking charges in other roads off The Avenue were confirmed by neighbours. Indeed although it has been many years since I worked in the City centre I used public transport purely because of the cost of parking one of the penalties of commuting.

I would also like to stress that this is not a NIMBY situation. The present yellow lines have been in existence for many years and the present set up works particularly as both Saxholm Way and Bassett Heath Avenue have a natural access aid with the side road (and hedge) running alongside The Avenue restricting immediate parking on the inward side. Pedestrians and cyclists can use this part of the road to cross with ease and with natural kerb breaks for house access I venture to suggest that there are no problems for pedestrian in the existing arrangements.

The Council posted the notices of change several weeks ago and most residents, who travel by car, were totally unaware of the proposed changes. When the topic came up at a social gathering I volunteered to write on behalf of the community to the council as I did some considerable time ago about potholes.

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As a result the Head of Road Maintenance visited me, with Sean McGrath, and the backlog has been cleared. Subsequently this work has been undertaken by the private sector and the productivity and effective working use of resources is clearly visible. On a personal note I applaud further privatisation and amalgamation with other authorities of core functions which not only yields a totally different culture, value for council tax funds but hopefully a considerable reduction in the obscene salaries paid and numbers involved in the top heavy management structure for the council.

The past couple of weeks have totally endorsed the social facility of parking on the flat in both Saxholm Way and Bassett Heath Avenue. Whilst I am now retired I am pleased to learn that the practise of moving cars to the top of both these 2 roads continues in the light of the weather forecast. I must add that for many of us last winter we did not use our cars for 3 weeks because of residual ice on the local roads.

The proposed suggestion reduces the availability of say 2 car spaces which moves vehicles further down each road onto the slopping area. As with many areas of the country, not just the City, we are a "no see" Police area so the proposed cuts in staffing will not make one iota of difference. We are however a burglary risk area and the annual service charge for my burglar alarm system has just arrived technically increasing the cost of the council tax for the increasingly failing Police service that last word being somewhat inappropriate. Therefore with respect their contribution of yellow lines for yellow lines sake falls short of the public's needs given that "if it aint broke don't mend it".

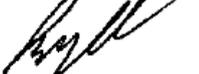
However, Murphy's law always applies, and it would be inevitable that if residents continue to park under the existing arrangements lines would be covered in snow and an enforcement officer, regardless of origin, as they are universally jobsworths could issue tickets which I suggest is an anti social act.

We now come to the core of any argument rules and regulations are merely guidance the art of management is their interpretation. Sadly we have evolved into the Brussels concept of drowning in blind obedience to rules for rules sake and therefore I commend the old logo for the council "working for you".

This concept is my (in conjunction with other local residents particularly those who use cars to travel to work) interpretation of the individual case for Saxholm Way and Bassett Heath Avenue. The community and authorities are adequately served by the existing arrangements which satisfy safety with no parking immediately upon important junctions, pedestrian and cyclist access and by virtue of a natural break immediate space on the flat to avoid congestion or collision in the event of skidding.

I trust that common sense, and in particular practicability, will prevail and the existing arrangements will continue and those making any decisions will be able to support the community rather than issue blanket arrangements based on text book thinking.

Yours sincerely



R A Westcott