

AFFADAVIT - DAVID JOHN WEEDALL

Statement to the Scrutiny Committee on Consultation on the Communal Bin Scheme by David Weedall

1. I, DAVID JOHN WEEDALL OF 12 ALEXANDRA VILLAS, BRIGHTON, EAST SUSSEX DO HEREBY MAKE OATH AND SWEAR AS FOLLOWS:- That I have lived with my wife, and family in Alexandra Villas for the past eighteen and a half years and during this time have maintained an interest for the environment of the area; the buildings being of Grade 2 listed status and the entire area being of architectural significance. On occasions, I have been actively involved with issues affecting the local community. As a seemingly diminishing breed of Brightonians still living in the area, I have witnessed many and various changes to these towns over the years, some for the better, and some for the worse.
2. One change for the worse which springs to mind immediately is the ill fated Bin Trial of some three years ago in Albert Road, which for twelve months became what can only be best described as an extension of the Municipal Refuse Tip, for certain people across Brighton & Hove, who would regularly visit the bins with their unwanted items. Our property, is some twenty metres from that site which meant looking out on piles of refuse, old beds, fridges, freezers, chest freezers and broken hi fi systems, to name but a few.
3. It is little wonder to me then, that last Saturday night 24th April, a fridge freezer appeared by the side of the new communal bin, located in exactly the same area as the original trial bins, and remained there to the following Monday morning. Then on this Wednesday 28th an old mattress and two wooden pallets appeared. The pattern of fly tipping continues.
4. It was with some bewilderment that in November of last year, as I walked around the Powis / Montpelier area of the neighbourhood, I noticed a great number of "Say No to New Bins" flyers in the windows of many of the properties. At first I thought little of these notices, but within a couple of weeks, curiosity got the better of me, so I plucked up courage and knocked on one of the doors of a property displaying such a poster.
5. I was politely informed by the inhabitant, whom I did not know, that a Communal Bin Trial was to take place in the area, and that despite the fact that many of the residents objected to it, the Council were not really taking notice of such objections. Within a couple of days of

speaking to this resident, I noticed a small article in the Leader listing roads that were to be involved in this 'trial'.

6. Alexandra Villas and Albert Road were among those listed. Having made contact with the No to New Bins Campaign, I soon discovered that there was no one belonging to this campaign in the area in which I live; that being the North Laines/ St Peters Ward. Later, upon checking the windows of this area, not a single "Say No to New Bins" poster was being displayed. This led me to the conclusion that either everyone in this area was aware of the trial and fully supportive of it, or like ourselves had remained completely oblivious to its impending implementation.
7. In early January my wife and I decided that, at our expense, we would leaflet the relevant area ourselves with information of the proposed trial on one side of the flyer and "Say No to New Bins" on the other. It was amazing to see that within just a few days of our leafleting the area, posters suddenly appeared in many windows of residents who also wished to express opposition to the scheme. Opposition because so many of us had lived for years in this area with perfectly adequate refuse storage facilities in our garden areas and thus, had never had the need to put bin liners out on the pavements to await collection. Communal Bins were seeking to solve a problem that clearly did not exist.
8. By this time, it was apparent that some streets in the Powis and Montpelier areas had gained exemptions from the trial due to meetings between Cityclean and the residents. It appeared to us that we were too late to undertake any canvassing activity in our area; having been very late in our appreciation of what was occurring. But then we had a change of mind and decided to canvass two streets with a petition on whether or not they approved of the scheme.
9. To our astonishment, of all the properties canvassed, not one single person had any recollection of ever receiving a consultation leaflet from either Cityclean or the Council, and that our own leaflet we had previously distributed, was the first method by which people had been made aware. I can categorically state that no such leaflet was ever delivered to our property as I am personally scrupulous in the attention I give to any incoming communications. To this day, like thousands of other residents in the trial area, I have never had sight of the consultation leaflet.
10. The question therefore begs as to what proof can be provided that the consultation leaflets published by the Council/Cityclean were

ever delivered in roads within the North Laines, St Peters Ward area?
This is a question, I believe, that must be answered.

11. My information leads me to the conclusion, that these leaflets were not posted through doors as claimed. For if they had been, surely even by the very laws of probability, some people we canvassed would have been aware of the leaflets.
12. To add further salt to the wound, Brighton & Hove City Council Environmental Committee chose to ignore the petition that we raised in Alexandra Villas, when the Green Party raised a proposed amendment to remove our road from the trial on 29th January 2004. The petition had 67 names on it, representing 95% of households in the road. Where, I must ask, was the spirit of consultation there?
13. Finally I must conclude, that but for the efforts of my wife, myself and two other neighbours, the only awareness of this trial before the communal bins were put into place would have been the addressed letter we all received from the Council, informing us of the trial, just four days before its implementation. It is therefore my contention that no effective consultation ever took place within the North Laines / St Peters Ward and that the methods used to introduce this trial were both shady and insincere, to say the very least.]
14. So, Madam Chairman, I conclude my evidence unashamedly with this "sound bite" of a statement "Consultation on the Bin Trial? What Consultation?

SWORN by DAVID JOHN WEEDALL at

David Buck & Co
Solicitors
41 Dyke Road, Brighton
East Sussex, BN1 3JA

On 28th April 2004

Before me, *J McWilliams*
Solicitor