

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes.

Two Deputations received:

(i) Deputation regarding the inadequacy of coach parking in Brighton and Hove
(Referred from the Full Council meeting of 25 October 2012)**(Spokesperson) – Mr George Cummings**

“We are here on behalf of the Roedean Residents Association to ask the council to rectify the current situation without further delay. Brighton and Hove prospers enormously from the tourist industry and the tourists who come here and many thousands arrive by coach, dozens of coaches each week. However B & H City Council only provide 42 coach parking spaces in the city to manage the ever growing demand over recent years so officials have been quietly directing coaches to park along totally unsuitable roads adjacent to and actually within residential neighbourhoods such as Roedean Road, The Cliff, Roedean Crescent and Roedean Way being major examples.

As well as being a visual eyesore the continual mass of unofficial coach parking in this and other areas is dangerous to the road users and pedestrians alike; neither Roedean Road nor Roedean Way have pavements. Of course with no facilities provided for the drivers they are forced to resort to urinating and even defecating behind their vehicles which is an all too regular sight for local residents. Furthermore the volume of coach parking encourages lorries to park here (there is no HGV provision either) and as a result the whole area resembles a motorway service station without the services and not the beautiful residential neighbourhood that it actually is and deserves to remain.

Surely coach travel should be regarded as “green” and with the Green party doing everything they can to discourage the use of cars proper provision for coaches and their drivers is essential. The current provision could lead to questions on health and safety since the drivers spend many hours with no suitable rest area, food or toilets. We understand there is reluctance on the part of some companies to go to Brighton with these non-existent facilities but if these were in place they would send many more thus increasing business for the city in many different ways.

It cannot be stressed too highly the dangers this unauthorised parking creates. There is no pavement down Roedean Road, only a narrow pedestrian way marked with a white line over which most cars travelling towards the A259 are forced to drive. Any pedestrian takes his life in his hands using this way when coaches are parked. Also crossing the road is fraught with danger since there is no visibility, the bus service is disrupted because the drivers heading to Brighton rightly consider at certain times it

too dangerous to drive on the wrong side of the road. Getting on and off the bus is a major problem with no visibility of oncoming traffic. There has been a serious accident recently entirely attributable to one of the car drivers being forced on to the wrong side of the road and it is only a matter of time before there is another possibly fatal accident. The council should be aware that it will carry huge responsibility for any accident related to coach parking other than in officially designated areas.

We urge the council to stop stone-walling this problem as they have been doing for years and act immediately to provide a 21st. century coach parking provision on a suitable site for our city.”

Mrs Rosemary Shepherd
Ms Kay O'Dwyer
Mr Malcolm Cramp

Mr Christopher Wilson
Dr Bernard Rocks

Looking eastwards down Roedean Rd (no footpath) and Note coach parked in Roedean Way (no footpath).



(ii) Deputation: Parking Charges On and Around the London Road Area
(Referred from the Full Council meeting of 25 October 2012)

(Spokesperson) – Ms Ann Townsend

“At the beginning of April this year the cost of parking on and around the London Road went up not only significantly, but, as it turns out, also prohibitively. This has had an absolutely disastrous effect on the local businesses, with some retailers experiencing as much as a 30% decrease in trade.

Every shop and outlet in the London Road area has the same story to tell. Overnight there was a dramatic drop in trade with customers, after expressing their disbelief, disgust and anger at the cost of the parking, then saying that they would not be returning. Time and again potential customers have been seen to park, look at the cost of parking on the meters, then just get in their cars and drive off.

Passing trade, always an important asset to retailers has as good as disappeared. Customers are now often seen to hop out of their cars to buy just a single item whilst the driver of the car drives around the block once or twice until the shopper returns to the drop off point; this is an unsatisfactory mode of shopping for both customer, trader and the environment.

Local traders will testify that nothing, not the redevelopment of the Open Market nor the recession has had such a devastating effect on their trade as this recent increase in parking charges. The £1 charge for the first hour in the London Road car park has had no positive effect in alleviating the problem. On the contrary, the exorbitant rates for subsequent hours, including the higher charges for weekend parking, has only contributed to the loss of trade. Traders have had to make staff redundant.

This situation is economically unsound. People are losing their jobs. Shop owners who have been trading in the area for many years are now losing their livelihoods. Customers are losing their preferred area of shopping and let's be honest, the London Road has long been a life-line for people on low incomes.

Once the Open Market re-opens it will struggle to survive if it sits alone in a desolate, economic wasteland. This will turn into a lost opportunity. The traders of the open market have struggled for years for this rejuvenation, to bring it in line with modern, vibrant markets where local produce can be sold, alongside more colourful products, to local people. And what about the Mary Portas Funding? What is the point of investing this money if you can't even get the basics right and when it appears that the council is not committed to one of her fundamental recommendations - cheap easy parking. Get the cars parked up as quickly as possible and get the shoppers into the shops. Will this represent another lost opportunity? None of us want to see the Open Market become the 'Green' white elephant of Brighton, but unless something is done fast this is how it will be known.

This deputation is being made to demand that the parking charges be reviewed with the utmost urgency and returned long term to less than £1 an hour, a level commensurate with an economically depressed area, in a bid to encourage the return of shoppers and trade.

For the month of December, in the run-up to Christmas, we would like to see the well-advertised suspension of all parking charges, both on street and in the car park, in an

attempt to boost trade and re-coup the serious losses that have been forced upon this retail area since April. For the sake of the London Road you must act now.”