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HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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Consultation on Islington's transport strategy to 2041

By DIANE BURRIDGE

Clean air; no barriers to walking, cycling and public transport; all roads to be 20mph; no deaths or serious injuries on Islington's roads; and every school being on a 'school street' with traffic restricted during drop-off and pick-up times.

How can one object to these targets for Islington by 2041? We all want clean air and a safe environment, yet it is the implementation of policies that is key.

Why have 20mph speed limits when this is not enforced? How can there be no deaths or serious accidents when there are not enough police, or physical and other measures, to ensure this? Why have large reductions in air pollution caused by traffic when polluting barbecues are allowed in our green open spaces? And what about the noise pollution due to the increasing number of home-delivery motorbikes?

By 2041, the aim is that there will be 2,500 fewer cars owned by Islington residents (6.9% reduction on 37,372) - despite the population increasing by an expected 30.2% between 2011 and 2041- outpacing the growth of London overall - even though the borough is the most densely populated in the country with the least amount of open space.

Action is certainly needed in Islington when: only two of the 16 tube stations are fully accessible; 16% of residents have some kind of limiting long-term illness or disability, and 55% of residents do less than 20

minutes walking and/or cycling per day. And despite only 26% of households owning or having access to a private vehicle, 125 people in 2017 were killed or seriously injured in traffic collisions; 39 of our 58 schools have pollution levels above EU limits; and 7% of deaths in 2016 were

attributed to air pollution. Islington is a borough of through traffic - how do we control this? The HCA emphasised these points when responding to the Greater London Authority's Transport Strategy, in 2018: we will highlight these and other concerns to Islington, including:

1. The need for public toilets, and more staff including cleansing personnel and police officers, at large transport interchanges, such as at Highbury & Islington and Finsbury Park stations.
2. The obstacle course that many of us have to manoeuvre when crossing roads, such as Seven Sisters Road, Holloway Road and Blackstock Road - due to cars blocking pedestrian crossings, insufficient pedestrian crossings, and the little time before green lights turn red.
3. The importance of maintaining markings on roads where these have faded, e.g. at the junctions of Monsell and Ambler Roads.

To give your own feedback on the consultation, please see: www.islington.gov.uk/transportstrategy; or email transportstrategy@islington.gov.uk

The deadline for responding is Sunday 29 September 2019.

See page 3 for more information



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Tackling drug related crime and anti-social behaviour in Finsbury Park

By Cllr ANDY HULL, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety, London Borough of Islington (@AndyHull79)

Islington Council and Islington's police are leading a concerted multi-agency, tri-borough drive to tackle drug-related crime and antisocial behaviour in the Finsbury Park area, including the north end of Highbury.

The most recent pair of police raids in the patch, in August, uncovered a crack den; seized a stash of Class A drugs; took a dangerous machete off our streets; and saw a man arrested on suspicion of dealing.

Over the past 12 months in the area, eight crack houses have been closed; over 1,000 knives have been removed from the street; and over 35 rough sleepers have been rehomed.

Measures that have been put in place include extra uniformed police officers on patrol, based at Blackstock Road police station and on the beat around the Blackstock Triangle; increased use of police dispersal and stop-and-search powers; a knife bin installed outside St Mellitus Church; new CCTV cameras in crime hotspots; disabling the free-calls-to-mobiles function on BT Inlink booths; expanding the borough's network of

Safe Havens; and specialist targeted support for children at risk and their families.

There is still more to be done, and future plans for the area include:

- retaining an enhanced level of police resources and mounting targeted police operations;
- robust enforcement against crack houses;
- enhancing the support provided to people suffering from drug addiction;
- addressing families where crime and antisocial behaviour are entrenched and persistent;
- identifying young people at risk and providing them with wraparound support.

Following feedback from residents, we are also working harder to communicate what the authorities are doing to keep the community safe.

Over the summer, the council hand-delivered a joint letter from the police borough commander and me to 15,000 local households, laying out our understanding of the problems; what we're doing about them; and what's being planned for the months ahead. The letter also reminded neighbours of the vital importance of

reporting crimes in detail to 101 (or to 999 in an emergency). Without specific intelligence from the community, making real headway will take much longer.

For more information on what is being done to tackle crime in the borough and on how you can help, please visit:

www.islington.gov.uk/community-safety

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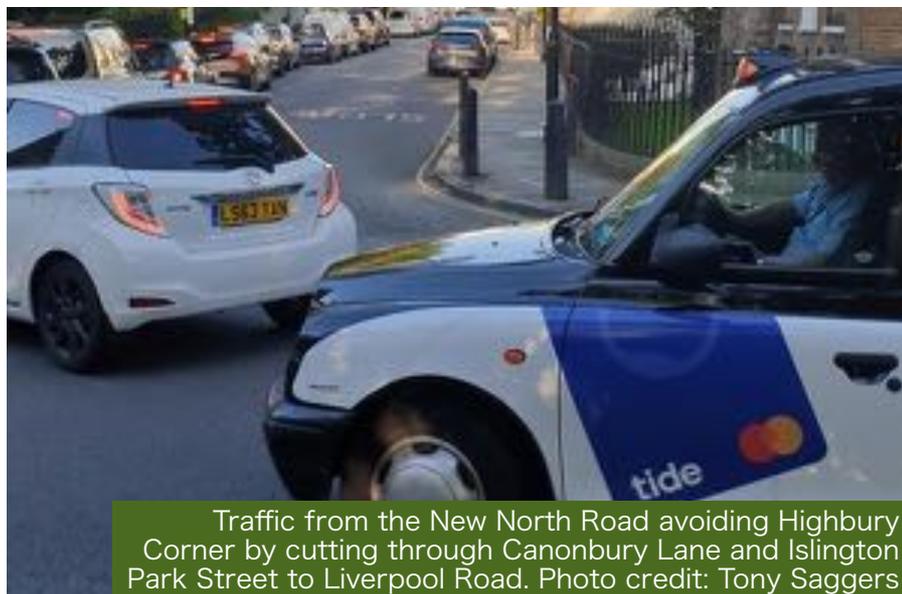
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Consultation on Islington’s transport strategy to 2041: wider issues



Traffic from the New North Road avoiding Highbury Corner by cutting through Canonbury Lane and Islington Park Street to Liverpool Road. Photo credit: Tony Saggars

By GILL SHEPHERD

Islington’s location is difficult from the Transport management point of view. Routes from outer London all home in on London’s central hub, and Islington is very close to that hub. Part of the borough’s traffic has come from much further north, north-east or east, on routes too long for cycling and originating in suburbs with a much thinner public transport concentration. Secondly, home-delivery traffic, often from outer London headquarters, criss-crosses all over North London. And then thirdly, laid over all that non-local traffic, are the transport needs of those who live in Islington and nearby. The three very different kinds of traffic all have to

flow through the borough currently. So, logically, London-wide - or at least North-London-wide - solutions need planning for, with Islington consulting with other boroughs, and with the Mayor.

Halting a proportion of the inward bound traffic from outer London

The provision of much more parking at outer London tube stations and railway stations would eliminate some traffic, just as Park and Ride Schemes do for cities like Bristol.

‘Staggered road-space’ schemes

For deliveries to Central London shops and businesses, we have got to

carve up the 24 hours between users differently. In Florence, for instance, deliveries to central city shops and markets have to take place during the night up to about 5.00am; no private cars are allowed into the city till the evening, and it is really only public transport, taxis, cycles and walkers during the main part of the day.

Road pricing

Eventually the congestion zone boundary may need to be extended outward, or some other pricing system introduced.

Thinking issues through at the appropriate scale

Highbury Corner is a classic example of thinking too small, without analysing the bigger picture. The excessively local focus on cycling - at the expense even of buses - cannot mitigate the larger problem at all. Vehicles are simply dispersing onto other roads to avoid the bottleneck at Highbury Corner. (See photograph).

Indeed, until changes are made to how London’s roads as a whole are used, Islington’s goal of carbon-neutrality by 2030 looks naïve. It will be impossible for the borough to address the issue on its own turf when so much of the traffic that passes through it comes from Barnet, Enfield, Edmonton and East London, and demands proper joint planning with other boroughs.

We hope that these broader approaches will also be considered in Islington’s new Transport Strategy alongside the intra-borough issues.

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Reviewing the impact of the Finsbury Park Wireless concerts

By DIANE BURRIDGE

After many complaints in 2017 and 2018, Islington Council met with the HCA to mitigate the negative impact of this major event on the area. Building on Hackney Council's work with their residents, many measures were put in place this year, including more noise monitoring and complaints lines; road barriers between Seven Sisters Road and Gillespie Road (only allowing residents and their visitors through); patrols by community enforcement officers and more cleaning of streets.

At monitoring meetings held during the Wireless Event in Finsbury Park on 6 and 7 July, and later on 19 July at the Town Hall, feedback was given. Overall, people felt that the situation had improved this year, but some issues for future events include:

•Moving the site in Finsbury Park to a location where access / egress and the transport focus is in Haringey. Most people who suffer from these major events are Hackney and Islington residents - although the Park is owned by Haringey Council.

•Extending the clean up to all of Highbury West Ward during and after events.

•The need for more police and enforcement officers in the vicinity of St Thomas's Road/Prah Road/Rock Street/Blackstock Road.

•The noise from crowds hanging around in the area late in the night created great disturbance to residents, including children having to go to school the next day.

•The stewards need more clearly-defined roles, including the right to disperse groups causing anti-social behaviour.

•There were particular traffic problems along Gillespie Road: this was used as a taxi/uber pick up area, with the no-entry point causing jams and ill-temper.

•Arsenal station was used more this year but there were no security staff present. One suggestion was to close this station, but this is a contentious matter for local residents.

•The loss of buses to Blackstock Road, and the lack of advance warning, caused much inconvenience.

•The nature of Wireless is inappropriate when some of the music glorifies violence, and uses derogatory language in an area which is a crime hotspot.

•Some local shops were threatened, and stolen from, by event goers. Shops need more police protection.

•Noise levels were lower than in previous years but noticeably picked up towards the end of Saturday and Sunday nights.

•These major events result in a substantial loss of the Park. And, why can't they take place in a purpose built arena away from residential areas? Such debates are vociferously being held in other forums, involving the Highbury Community Association and led by the Friends of Finsbury Park.

Islington is holding a **public meeting** for feedback on Thursday, 10 October 2019 at 6pm at the Town Hall in Upper Street. Please come if you want to influence what the Council will do next year to try to protect residents.



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Celebrations to mark Finsbury Park's 150th anniversary

By SAIRA BANO

On Saturday the 10th August 2019, a whole day of activities were planned to mark the 150th anniversary of the park. Zorbing (rolling about in a huge ball) was a popular choice among the sports on offer along with tennis, football and other activities. Many had fun on the climbing wall. Horse and carriage rides (see photo below) brought a nostalgic sense of Finsbury Park in the past. Unfortunately, bad weather forced the cancelling of some of the other activities, such as boat rides.

Near the Finsbury Park entrance, the space was given to a buzzing place called 'Further Field', full of highly engaging activities. Here, I encountered a Pink Robot called 'Doxbox'. It asked a few questions, and then revealed how much information the Tech Giants held about you. At the Citizen Sci-fi Future Fair, Planet Cashless pointed out how much our privacy is invaded by the government, banks and others, to the point where the economy will be controlled by the few.

The supporting show 'Parklife' provided at the Park Theatre was well attended. Performed beautifully by the artists involved, it had everything - singing, dancing, the evocation of sorrow, pleasure, and anger along with messages about integration and world peace.

All in all a wonderful celebration of the Park



Gillespie Park wins prestigious Green Flag award



By GILL SHEPHERD

A much-loved nature reserve tucked away behind Arsenal Tube Station was presented with the prestigious Green Flag Award in July.

The award, organised by the charity 'Keep Britain Tidy', was given to Gillespie Park, which is home to an ecology centre along with ponds, meadows and woodlands.

Volunteers from Friends of Gillespie Park, who spend an estimated 2,500 hours maintaining the park each year, joined council environment chief Cllr Claudia Webb at the park to celebrate the win. The flag will fly at the entrance.

Sue Jandy, chair of the Friends of Gillespie Park, said: "We hope that this award will encourage more people in our community to discover and enjoy the park."

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Local government boundary review proposes end of Highbury’s East & West wards

By GILL SHEPHERD

Islington Council are asking local people and organisations to comment on its draft recommendations for new ward boundaries across Islington, and are open to further suggestions from residents to improve these recommendations. All submissions will be considered.

The website shows current proposals for new ward boundaries (in red) compared to existing boundaries (in blue). It is possible to click on any ward to find out how many voters are included in it and how many councillors it is proposed should represent it. It is possible to draw your own boundaries and annotate the map online.

In our area, Highbury East and West go, and become part of new Highbury, Gillespie and Finsbury Park wards.

This stage of the consultation closes on 7 October 2019. See the link at the [Boundary Review website](#) by clicking here (online edition only)

Should the road across the middle of Highbury Fields be closed permanently?

By DAVID BRAINE & GILL SHEPHERD

The top end of Highbury Crescent is currently occupied by TfL as a work site for the Highbury Corner scheme, the works will be partially complete by October 2019 followed by Urban Realm planting, snagging and defect works for the scheme. TfL plan on keeping the area closed up until early December 2019. Following this the Council will need to undertake inspections and remedial works to the area which includes drainage and highway works. Currently there are no plans to close this section of Highbury Crescent permanently, however the Council may need to review this as part of the post implementation surveys for the Highbury Corner scheme to minimise potential adverse impacts. (Karen Agbabiaka, Head of Public Realm, Highways). Richard Watts, Leader of the Council, commented, 'I have asked officers to look at options and funding routes to see if the road can be closed permanently'.

There are other issues which will need to be considered in making the decision whether or not to close the road.

Firstly, there are now only two ways of reaching roads in the north west corner of Highbury Fields (Battledean, Framfield, Highbury Terrace, Highbury Terrace Mews) from A-roads. Southbound on the Holloway Road, entry is possible via Fieldway Crescent; northbound from Highbury Corner, drivers have to go up Highbury Grove, left into Baalbec Road, left into Highbury Place, and right round the edge of the whole of Highbury Fields to reach home.

Secondly, and more importantly, the removal of the roundabout at Highbury Corner means that traffic is now stopped for much of the time at sets of lights, instead of flowing smoothly. As a result, traffic backs up Highbury Place because of the lights by Barclay's Bank. Drivers wanting to turn right into Highbury Crescent from Highbury Place become frustrated and jump the queue, which is dangerous for pedestrians.

There would be far less traffic if the top end of Highbury Crescent were to be reopened.

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Arsenal Football Club planning application 2019: the HCA's response

Using of local roads for supporters' coach parking on match days

In this planning application, Arsenal Football Club seek to make permanent their use of the following sites for supporters' coach parking on match days:

- Queensland Road - 18 spaces
- Hornsey Road - 13 spaces
- Sobell Centre - 12 spaces
- Hornsey St. - 11 spaces (not to be used more than twice per season)
- Finsbury Park - 90 plus spaces (exceptional circumstances only)

On the following grounds, the Highbury Community Association opposes :

- 1.the continuing use of two of the above sites for coach parking
- 2.AFC's application for permanent use of the sites

Continuing use of existing sites

It is clear from Steer's evidence, that the number of coaches parked has declined. In the 18/19 season, the average number of coaches on match days was 14, and the maximum 27 (Steer, p. 17). Queensland Road and Hornsey Road together have capacity for 31 coaches.

•Hornsey St. can only be used twice per season, and was not used at all last season, so it is clearly reasonable to discontinue its use since it is a very narrow road.

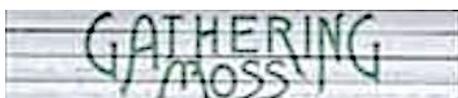
•It is also clearly reasonable that coach parking at the Sobell Centre should be discontinued. Its use is no longer justified by the number of coaches, and we also feel strongly that users of this sports centre should be able to rely on full access to the car parking there.

Permanent use of sites

With respect to AFC's permanent use of the remaining sites, Steer presents no evidence concerning likely future trends for the number of supporters' coaches beyond stating that an increase is unlikely given the recent decline (pp. 21-22).

Data from other clubs should have been provided to indicate how far the downward trend of coaches at Arsenal is duplicated elsewhere, or whether fluctuating numbers can be expected in future. It is not reasonable to make current provision of coach parking permanent on the evidence provided, since the need may diminish. **We recommend a review every three to five years.**

The Highbury Community Association also **opposes** making current parking arrangements permanent on the grounds that changing technology may enable the safe parking of large vehicles under the stadium in future. In the past, HCA secured an undertaking from the Islington Planning Committee that the use of new monitoring technology, used for example on vehicles crossing the Channel, would be explored with the police, to allow coach parking under the Stadium. But the issue was never addressed as far as we know. It should continue to be addressed, since changing technology may permit efficient and economic searching of vehicles in future. We strongly urge that as soon as possible any such new security checks available should also be used on the coaches parked on Queensland Road. The very high buildings and dense occupancy so close to the Stadium are clearly at the same risk on match days as that hypothesized for the Stadium itself. **We recommend a review of current coach parking arrangements in the light of technological change every three to five years.**



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'A park for Finsbury' - a celebration of Finsbury Park's 150 year story by Hugh Hayes

By SARAH POTTER

To mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of Finsbury Park on 7th August this year, The Friends of Finsbury Park have published a new edition of the park's history first published by their previous chair Hugh Hayes in 2001 (ISBN 978-0-9540637-1-9). Its distinctive feature is the range of historical source reproduced in the book to illustrate Hayes's story. Maps, plans, water colours, articles from the press, official reports, petitions, acts of parliament and postcards all provide a vivid accompaniment to the text, bringing the historical context to life. Valuable oral history accounts from local residents also feature in the book.

To trace the successful devel-

opment of the park from its opening in 1869, Hayes draws on its Board Minutes, which record 30,000 visitors to the park on Whit Monday 1876, and the building of a bandstand and exhibition of chrysanthemums in 1881, which became an annual event visited by "thousands upon thousands" according to the Pall Mall Gazette of 5 October 1883. The Gardeners' Chronicle of 1889 reported that the park had 60 "well furnished" flower beds, including a Rosery. London County Council records for 1902 show that Finsbury Park was the third most expensive park under their management after Victoria Park in East London and Battersea Park in South London.

A major historical theme noted by Hayes is the long record of local campaigns for the park. A Select Committee of 1833 noted the need for parks in east, south and north London for the recreation of the poor, to complement Regent's Park in the west. Yet it took local groups until 1869 to open Finsbury Park in north London. From the 1990s, the park's funding from Haringey council was under severe pressure, resulting in a decline of its infra-structure and increasing anti-social behaviour. The council relied on festivals for income, and Lottery money from 2002 for improving the park was used for a road to enable festivals to access the site. In 2017, the Friends of Finsbury Park took Haringey Council to the High Court challenging the exclusion of local people from the park during festivals and securing the use of festival income for the benefit of the park.

See page 5 of this edition to read about the celebrations that took place this summer

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