



# THE TEDDINGTON SOCIETY

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29th July 2007

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR TEDDINGTON RESIDENTS**

**RESIDENTS SAY “NO” TO CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES (CPZS) FOR FIFTH TIME. 2272 HOUSEHOLDS CONSULTED, 341 SAY “YES” TO CPZ (15%), 594 SAY”NO” (26%).**

### **1. Agreed consultation procedure not followed**

The latest controlled parking consultation has been embroiled in controversy, with the setting aside of the new consultation procedures laid down in Appendix 2 of Cabinet Document 14 dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006. This new policy document gave wide ranging powers to the Cabinet Member for Transport when the safeguard of a minimum voting criteria for the implementation of CPZs was removed – an amendment that was strongly opposed by the Teddington Society. The revised procedures envisage pre-consultation discussions with Ward Councillors (Teddington has nine), Community Groups, Residents’ Associations and Business Associates, to obtain views and invite participation. It also suggests that a Public Meeting should be held, at which residents’ views would be sought, and representation invited. Knowing the new arrangements, I asked Councillors, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 Area Consultation Meeting (ACM), to ensure that as a part of the preparation for the next CPZ consultation, the Teddington Town Centre Study Residents’ Parking sub-Committee members and the Teddington Society Roads & Transport Group should have sight of all consultation documents to ensure that they were clear, concise, informative, and asked the right questions. Unfortunately this was not done, and this has given rise to a number of serious problems, in the main arising from the Cabinet Member’s decision to abandon laid down consultation procedures, and treat this as a new “one-stage” consultation for a much larger area than had been indicated at the ACM or in any previous discussions with Officers and local Councillors.

### **2. Whole of central Teddington proposed as CPZ – a surprise to all residents**

The three central Teddington Councillors have always been open about their support for a large CPZ covering most of central Teddington, but even knowing this, it was a total surprise for all local residents to receive a document showing a very large area of Teddington from Udney Park Road to Coleshill Road being consulted about becoming a CPZ. The “HAVE YOUR SAY” document issued with the questionnaire states “The purpose of this consultation is to find out from residents and businesses in the area shown on the map whether there is support or not for a CPZ”. It goes on to say that “the objective of the consultation is to obtain feedback from residents and businesses to determine whether there is sufficient support for a CPZ *in the area within the red boundary of the map on the front cover of this document.*” There are a number of questions about the accuracy of the original summaries produced to show road by road voting, but at the time of writing (29<sup>th</sup> July), the number of households consulted was

2272, with 341 (15%) voting “YES” to a CPZ, and 594 (26%) voting “NO”. ***This result means that the Cabinet Member for Transport, under the published terms of this one-off consultation, has no option but to say that a CPZ will not be put in place within the red boundary of the map.*** Good news for Teddington’s businesses and shops, and the majority of residents, but not for the residents in a small number of roads by the station.

### **3. The Teddington Town Centre Improvements Study 2001/2 – Residents’ Parking sub-Committee Report**

Regular readers of my reports in Tidings will remember that I chaired the Teddington Study Residents’ Parking sub-Committee which produced a comprehensive Report in December 2002 on transport and parking issues in Teddington (the Report is on the Society’s Website, and in Teddington Library). The Report recommended that the small areas immediately adjacent to the station should be consulted on three options:-

**Option One** – No change to present arrangements

**Option Two** – A “no-cost” scheme which would allow parking on certain designated yellow lines outside the rush hours. To ensure regular turnover of parking spaces, many of those spaces would be time limited, eg. “one hour – no return within two hours”.

**Option Three** – A two hour Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) requiring residents and businesses to purchase a parking permit.

The Society’s transport and parking policies have been based since December 2002, on the 28 recommendations in the Residents’ Report, as it reflected the carefully considered views of 13 widely experienced residents who had lived, in total, well over 250 years in Teddington. The sub-Committee found no evidence of any sort to support local Councillors’ belief that there was widespread support for CPZs across Teddington – in fact support was estimated to be less than 6% of TW11 households overall. Support in the 2004 CPZ consultation was under 9%, in the smaller 2005 CPZ consultation was under 15%, and in this current even smaller consultation, also around 15% - confirmation that the sub-Committee’s judgement was spot-on.

### **4. A summary of recent consultations**

Where do we go from here? There have been a number of, as yet unexplained actions in earlier consultations that have created doubts about the basis and reliability of the council’s consultation and management procedures. In particular, a lack of a management system that ensures that all public documents are accurate and fairly reflect the outcome of any consultation, and that also ensures that Cabinet Member’s decisions are carried out and implemented.

For example:-

**(i) February 2004 consultation.** 28.4% of the mainly anti-CPZ votes (599 in total) were excluded from the results of the consultation without the knowledge of the Cabinet Member. To make matters worse, extra voting documents were issued and electronic votes accepted, apparently without controls in place to prevent duplication, and an anti-CPZ petition from the York Road area was not produced at the TCG. At the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2004 TCG meeting, the Cabinet Member instructed that officers should investigate the freeing up of yellow lines for free turnover parking, and that some of the Residents’ Parking Sub-Committee’s options should be put to residents for consideration – this was not done.

**(ii) February 2005 consultation.** Tighter documentary controls were in place, but the criteria for the introduction of CPZs quoted in the consultation documents were incorrect. The analysed results were agreed as being as correct as they could be in the circumstances, although they may have created some misunderstandings among voters. At the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005 TCG, the Cabinet member directed that a consultation should take place with a view to reducing the lengths of yellow lines to create 30 – 40 free turnover parking spaces, and that corners should be marked with yellow lines to

ensure that pedestrians and vehicles could move safely and freely. A “walkabout”, led by Councillor Mumford, involving me and two council officers, took place on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2005. This resulted in 41 recommendations for the introduction of free turnover parking spaces, safety markings on various corners, the removal of certain yellow lines, and the introduction of a disabled bay in Station Road by the station, and one outside Park Road Surgery. Virtually all the recommendations were advertised in the local press shortly afterwards, but implementation did not take place. After numerous chase ups by me, 6 free turnover spaces have been put in place outside Teddington Cheese, and the two disabled bays have been advertised, but are not yet installed. The remaining recommendations should have been put in place well before the end of 2005 – we are still waiting.

**(iii) June 2007 consultation.**

**Problem 1 - Timing.**

The timing of this consultation is particularly unfortunate, as it took place when kerbside parking on virtually the whole of the west side of the station was disrupted by road works, including new storm drain installations in Park Lane from October 2006, gas works all over the centre of Teddington, and electrical works along Park Road and in Adelaide Road. All this displacement involving between 60 and 100 vehicles was taking place throughout the consultation period, and clearly some vehicles were displaced to areas such as Avenue Road, creating concerns about any future introduction of controlled parking. It would have been sensible to delay consultation until all road works had been completed so that voting would have taken place under normal parking arrangements, but many local residents believe that the timing was aimed at maximising support for CPZs by consulting during this period of disruption.

**Problem 2. Selection of the area to be consulted about the introduction of a CPZ.**

The general understanding from Councillors’ statements at Area Consultation Meetings and at various meetings about transport and parking issues, was that two very small areas, one either side of the station, would be the subject of consultation about the introduction of controlled parking, with any nearby roads that might suffer displacement parking also being consulted. What was never discussed or expected, was that a much larger area, which has time after time rejected proposals for CPZs, should be proposed as a CPZ. This has created real concern and anger among our hard-pressed shops and businesses, and almost as much of an adverse reaction among residents who are, quite frankly, fed up with the support being given to a tiny number of residents around the station, to the disadvantage of the rest of Teddington. Had a public meeting taken place, Councillors would have been much more aware of the public mood, which is that residents want to preserve the ambience and friendliness of Teddington, for the benefit of the community as a whole, and for anyone who visits or works in Teddington. Residents and businesses do not want CPZs.

**Problem3. The plan displayed in Teddington Library.**

This plan showed virtually every road within the red lined boundary marked up with hundreds of controlled parking bays, including in roads, which anyone with even a smidgeon of local knowledge, would know that there were either no suitable spaces, or would cause significant loss of valuable parking spaces and destroy long standing co-operative parking arrangements. Such was the adverse reaction of residents, that local councillors were forced to arrange for the plans to be removed from the Library, and mount a damage limitation exercise by saying that the plans had not been authorised.

**Problem 4. Failure to book and advertise Transport Consultative Group meeting for 24<sup>th</sup> July at the Baptist Church.**

Although the CPZ consultation documents mentioned the possibility of a TCG meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July, this did not appear on the public noticeboard in Broad Street, although a TCG meeting for 18<sup>th</sup> July did. Residents not familiar with the TCG arrangements may well have thought that the meeting was for Councillors and Officers only – not a public meeting. The Baptist Church had not been asked whether the hall was free on that

date, nor had any booking been made. This meant that Teddington's residents and businesses who had received consultation documents were unaware whether or not a meeting was to take place, and any resident or business outside the red lined area would have no idea that a meeting about something that could have direct and adverse consequences on them personally was to take place.

Had I not circulated a reminder about the meeting to a number of residents on my Teddington Information/Consultation list, the Church would have been closed on 24<sup>th</sup> July. Society member Colin Hicks, on seeing my reminder, knew that the Church did not have a booking on that night, so he contacted his colleagues at the Church who then contacted the meeting administrator to find out whether the meeting was to take place. A booking was then made, but no advice was given regarding layout, availability of microphones etc. so the TCG members, almost none of whom were known to local residents, were sat on the podium, some way from the couple of dozen members of the audience.

Two residents from Victoria Road spoke in favour of a CPZ, but the majority of speakers from Field Lane, Gomer Gardens and Blackmores Grove area spoke passionately against, citing the need to preserve their conservation area and their unofficial, but mutually beneficial parking arrangements that have been successfully in place for over 20 years. The general feeling was that none of the TCG members, only one of whom had anything to do with Teddington, knew anything about Teddington or its residents, and therefore should not be involved in making decisions about Teddington. My speaking notes are on the TeddSoc Website, these identify questions that still need answers.

## **5. The Teddington Society's solution**

In view of the decision that the Cabinet Member for Transport will have to make to reject a CPZ for the advertised area, the doubtful legality of the TCG meeting that was not advertised, and the relatively small turnout of residents at the meeting, the Society could rightfully argue that no further controlled parking should be introduced in Teddington, and after so many consultations, that the CPZ proposals are dead in the water for the foreseeable future. But this is not being proposed because it would not solve the problem that exists around the station for up to ten roads.

The Society has therefore been proposing for several years, that two very tightly drawn two hour controlled parking areas (not zones) just along house frontages be introduced, which would exclude all Community Parking spaces (ie. spaces not outside a house frontage but along a side wall, park or railway boundary). This would give generous parking for residents in the roads, without creating the significant displacement that would occur if Community Parking spaces were to be included, and removes the threat to our fragile shopping centres.

To give an idea of the effect of the inclusion of all Community Parking spaces, and assuming that houses with crossovers also park off-road, the 378 houses in the likely area have 546 spaces outside houses (not all available for parking), plus 108 Community parking spaces, plus 153 off-road spaces, a total of 807 spaces for just 378 houses – clearly and unacceptable situation for an area around the station which “belongs” to the whole community, and where free parking on a first come first served basis should always be available. We hope that this thoroughly fair and sensible solution will be adopted, and this long standing saga which has divided the community for so long can finally be put to bed.

Brian A Holder