



St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Newsletter June 2016

Memorial Park consultation survey

At the open meeting of StQW/SHRA members on June 9th, we discussed the Council's current survey on potential improvements at Kensington Memorial Park (sometimes known as St Marks Park).

About half the 60 people present had received a leaflet about the survey, while others (including residents at Argyll Place, overlooking the park) had not. The survey can be accessed from this [link](https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/survey/kmpimprovements2016/kmp_improvements_concept_ideas_phase_one.htm) on the RBKC website https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/survey/kmpimprovements2016/kmp_improvements_concept_ideas_phase_one.htm

The survey seeks views on various options, including that of replacing the existing football pitch with an artificial surface and floodlighting. This implies high fencing and a booking system, removing this grass area from general public use as part of the park.

There was unanimous agreement (on a hand vote) that this was not what the park needs. Everyone at the meeting would prefer to see £150,000 of S106 receipts from the Argyll Place development spent on sorting out the existing drainage system for the grass pitch, and providing a good quality grass surface.

Improvements to the changing rooms and some more seating would also be welcome. A letter has been sent to RBKC following the meeting and can be found on the [frin page of our website at www.sthelensresidents.org.uk](http://www.sthelensresidents.org.uk). Please also respond to the survey if you want your views to be added.

Cycle Quietway through this neighbourhood

RBKC planning officers gave us a presentation at the June 9th meeting of the proposed route for a TfL/RBKC 'cycle quietway' route using Latimer Road and Bracewell Road.

Plans for the critical junctions at North Pole Road were discussed in detail. As residents know all too well, this is a major pinchpoint in the local road network with traffic (and frustrated drivers) backed up along four routes feeding into the street.

We have since written to the Council with two suggestions for an alternative route (one using Eynham Road and the other Highlever Road). We are assured that these will be looked at before any decision is made.

The StQW letter can be found at www.stqw.org in the latest 'news' item.

Front gardens, bin and bike stores

The June 9th meeting also discussed the growing trend towards larger bin and bike stores in front gardens in the StQW neighbourhood, along with the increasing use of hard and impermeable surfaces.

It was agreed that house owners should be reminded via this newsletter of when planning permission is required for alterations to front gardens and boundary walls.

The position is complicated. We have tried to explain the relationship between national 'Permitted Development' rights, RBKC planning policies, and Article 4 Directions in Annexe A of the StQW Neighbourhood Plan (which can be downloaded at www.stqw.org).

The 'interactive house' at www.planning.portal.co.uk explains what can and cannot be done as 'permitted development' without planning permission. If you want a front boundary wall/fence/gate/railings over 1m high, you are likely to need planning permission (for example).

PD rights can be removed by a local planning authority via Article 4 Directions. Many streets in the StQW area are covered by two such Directions, applying to roof-scapes and front elevations. These are Directions 46/62 and 69 and can be found on the RBKC website. The Council also has a policy CE2(f) resisting impermeable surfaces in front gardens (you can pave over up to 5 sq metres without planning permission).

In the StQW Plan we included policies C3 and C7 to try to reinforce and clarify what is, and is not, allowed by way of alterations to front elevations, gardens, and boundary walls.

These policies were agreed via discussion at open meetings. StQW Policy C7 requires alterations or new structures at the front of houses to be 'visually discreet'.

It is up to the Council's planning department, and not the StQW Forum, to decide what is acceptable as 'visually discreet' or what will 'cause harm' to the conservation area. But it is unwise to assume that you can go ahead with alterations without at least checking the position or seeking permission. RBKC has a team of six enforcement staff, busy across all parts of the borough.

StQW/SHRA very rarely initiates enforcement action. But given that the appearance of our streets is changing in ways that many do not welcome we may need to give the Council a collectively agreed view (via future open meetings) on what alterations are considered to be 'visually discreet' and what would cause harm.