



Islington Quietway proposals raise concerns of Amwell Society members

The front page article in our summer/autumn newsletter now at amwell.org.uk/docs/newsletter/SummerAutumn2015.pdf has created considerable interest with our members. Liveable Islington's proposals at www.liveableislington.uk call for considerable changes to motor vehicle routes, including the closure of Amwell Street, Lloyd Street and Great Percy Street to through traffic. Whilst these changes will improve the streetscape for cyclists passing through our area, it is far from clear that the changes will benefit residents and shopkeepers to the same extent.

In this special supplement to our Christmas 2015 newsletter, we are publishing two letters from Society members, setting out their concerns. Our purpose in doing this is to establish whether these concerns are widely shared, or whether our members are generally supportive of the Liveable Islington proposals. Please let us have your views by emailing us at info@amwell.org.uk or by writing to the newsletter editor, David Sulkin at 49 Wharton Street. We will then decide what action the Society needs to take to ensure that the views of our members are taken fully and completely into account.

If you would like more information about the numerous Quietway plans and how they fit with the TfL pan-London for cycling strategy you can visit the LBI website at www.islington.gov.uk/islington/walking-cycling/cycling/Pages/default.aspx

The Amwell Society welcomes the growth of cycling in the capital, as a quick and healthy way to get around, and as a means of reducing congestion and pollution. We also accept that there will be disruption as roads are altered to safely accommodate increasing numbers of cyclists. However important questions remain, such as:

- How do we balance the needs of cyclists with those of residents, shopkeepers and other road users?
- How do we ensure that cyclists show consideration for others by adhering to speed limits and traffic signals, and generally observing the Highway Code?

Let us know what you think about cycling and the Amwell area

Letter from Darian Mitchell, Lloyd Baker Street

I do not think that we have a problem with cars in the Amwell area although I concede that there is an increase in traffic during the rush hour on Amwell Street. Everywhere else is relatively quiet. The congestion charge, traffic calming measures and the 20 mph speed limit have all contributed to greatly reducing any concerns about car use. What we now have to worry about is the increase in cyclists whose numbers are beginning to get problematic.

I neither drive nor cycle, but use public transport or walk, so I have no vested interest in this matter, but I am beginning to feel more comfortable having a few cars on the road, rather than hordes of cyclists, some of whom are reckless and inconsiderate. The local school was forced to ask for a lollipop person, not because cars would not stop at the pedestrian crossing, but because some cyclists who seem to think that the Highway Code does not apply to them. I do not want to stop people being able to ride bikes safely, but I don't think it should be made easier for them to hurtle down the road oblivious to hapless pedestrians who wish to cross. The presence of cars seems to keep everyone more conscious of other road users.

There is also another reason not to close roads to cars, apart from the obvious one of making access difficult. Through traffic discourages people from congregating particularly at night. There are examples in our area where street closures have led to increased anti-social behaviour.

It's all very well talking about a village atmosphere in central London in the 21st century. We are not going to go back to the 1950s when everyone knew each other and people felt safe and everyone walked everywhere. Times have changed. Children don't play in the street any more, and if they did they would probably just succeed in annoying the neighbours.

The Amwell Society campaigns to protect and promote the area and its architectural heritage and to encourage a sense of community. The Society serves Pentonville Road, Penton Rise, King's Cross Road, Farringdon Road, Rosebery Avenue and St. John Street and all the streets within the area.

The Society is open to all residents. For information about becoming a member, telephone 020 7833 1044 or e-mail info@amwell.org.uk
Chair – Paul Thornton. Secretary – Francois Smit. Treasurer – Bibra Ronalds. Newsletter editor – David Sulkin.

Letter from Sue Prickett and John Bryer, Great Percy Street published in a recent edition of Islington Tribune

We think that Quietways are a good idea and that cyclists should have safer routes away from main roads (Quietway makes streets less dangerous, November 27). However, we are very worried by the extent of the bollards and barriers which Islington Cyclists Action Group and Liveable Islington are proposing for the Amwell Street section of this route. These filters, which permit cyclists only to pass, would impact severely on the movement of vehicles in the area.

The filters would be in Amwell Street, Margery Street, Lloyd Street and Great Percy Street and would block all vehicles. There would be no through traffic on Amwell Street or any of its side streets. Access to, or egress from, streets off Amwell Street would be severely limited.

To give you an example, our part of Great Percy Street's access would be solely from Pentonville Road via Amwell Street (a turn which is already restricted to traffic travelling towards King's Cross only). Under the proposals we could no longer gain access from Kings Cross Road up Vernon Rise, nor from Rosebery Avenue up Amwell Street, nor from Lloyd Baker Street up Lloyd Street. Other side roads would face similar restrictions.

The Peel Centre, in Percy Circus, used by many elderly people every day, could only be reached from Kings Cross Road to the south and not down Great Percy Street from the north. The route 812 bus, a lifeline to those attending the Peel Centre or local shops, could not run at all through our neighbourhood.

Fewer cars and less exhaust fumes may sound good but there is a balance to be struck between that aim and the needs of anybody wanting a delivery, or moving house or bringing a wheelchair-bound passenger home or transporting small children or frail elderly people (or those with reduced mobility) or trying to run a business or shop in the area.

On its website, Liveable Islington claims it wants to "reclaim the village atmosphere" but this re-imagining of our neighbourhood has not been debated in the neighbourhood or by local groups. At the moment it is for the convenience of cyclists, many of whom are passing through only and does not properly consider the needs of the wide range of residents and businesses that make up our community.

If there is a petition with 2,500 signatures of cyclists in favour perhaps our community ought to start its own petition to get what we would prefer on record.

Some facts about cycling in London

- New figures from Transport for London [TfL] show that more people are cycling in London than ever before. The number of cyclists rose in 2014 by 11%
- The total number of cycling journeys rose by 5% to 610,000 a day - 23 million a year, TfL said
- Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, welcomed the figures. He said "*These are tremendously encouraging figures and will, I hope, give even more people the confidence to get on their bikes*".
- However, campaigners said the number of cycle fatalities on London's road was unacceptably high
- One journey in every 515,000 now ends in death or serious injury. 13 cyclists were killed on London's roads in 2014 and 14 in 2013
- The charity London Cycling Campaign (LCC) urged bosses to put in place desperately needed infrastructure to reduce the danger for the growing number of cyclists
- Operation Safeway was implemented in November 2013 by the Metropolitan Police in response to a series of cyclist deaths. It has helped improve driver and cyclist behaviour
- During the first six-weeks Operation Safeway resulted in 13,800 drivers and cyclists being issued with fines for jumping red lights, cycling on footpaths and having incorrect lights. More than 600 officers have been deployed at 166 key junctions during morning and evening rush hours for six weeks
- Officers target all road users committing traffic offences.
- The Met said it would specifically focus on people using mobile phones whilst driving, speeding, failing to wear seat belts and on vehicle defects. "Every road death or serious injury is a needless tragedy. We must reverse this trend."



A traffic policeman on a bike pulls over a cyclist

Don't forget...Let us know what you think about cycling and the Amwell area.
We're keen to hear and circulate all views and opinions so that the best decisions for all are made.