

Minutes of Forum Meeting
12 June 2009

Present: 17

Apologies: 5

Catherine welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Philip Burns - Operational Manager Parking Services

Philip introduced himself and the Parking Service.

There are two services in Hackney involved in Parking, they are:

Parking - Parking bays, permits, companion badges

Access team - Blue Badges and allocations of Disabled Bays.

The Blue Badge is a national scheme which allows badge holders to park in places where there is limited parking or close access to shops etc.

The Companion Badge allows you to park within the borough over night without having to display your blue badge.

Phillip showed us a power point of where you can and cannot use your blue badge or companion badge.

Q. If an estate has individual disabled parking bays, why doesn't the rest of the borough?

A. Because they operate independently of the Borough. We are reviewing this at the moment and will be holding consultations about individualised parking bays.

The Parking team are also making a guide to disabled parking in Hackney; he would like Disability Backup to be consulted on a draft of this booklet.

There has been a recent blue badge fraud prevention team which will work to reduce the amount of blue badge fraud. This team is undergoing training but is now live.

Q. Can we have the hotline number of this team?

A. The team are also currently auditing their parking bays, there are 1,000 disabled bays in the borough and they are trying to update the system hence the many letters members have been receiving.

They are also holding a parking arrangements consultation to review if parking bays are in the right places throughout the borough.

Questions:

1. Graeae Theatre Company are a disability led theatre company moving to Hackney. They have recently been turned down for disabled bays outside their new building despite being run almost totally by disabled people.

2. When parking in estates, can you park on double yellow lines?

- Yes unless you are causing an obstruction, e.g for refuse collection.

3. If I park in a disabled parking bay in my CPZ, do I need to display my clock?

-No, we have changed the system so you do not need to display your clock (it was brought to Phillip's attention that many people were given tickets for not displaying their badge despite having a letter telling them they did not need their badge)

4. Are the parking enforcers trained and told about the changes to the system regarding displaying the clock in your bay?

- Yes they are trained, each enforcer has a handheld computer which makes them go through a number of questions before issuing the ticket. This should not allow a ticket to be given if car is parked in its bay without clock.

- Phillip will check that the computer is programmed correctly

5. I got a ticket for parking in another bay because mine was being used, why?

- This is the policy, we are reviewing this to allow people to have individual bays restricting others from using your bay.

- Disability Backup will be informed when this consultation takes place. Phillip told the group that such changes to policy is a long process.

6. Why aren't enforcement officers giving tickets or moving vehicles that obstruct pavements and pathways? Whilst Streetscene seems to be making improvements to improve access issues, the parking team does not seem to be thinking about these issues.

- Unless the vehicle has 2 wheels on the footway it is not enforceable.

- Any vehicle that obstructs the highway is a police matter and not within the enforcers jurisdiction.

7. Some long streets (like Sandringham Road) have parking nose to bumper making it impossible for wheelchair users and others to cross.

- There should be dropped kerbs where parking is not allowed, this should be taken up with Street Scene, we are committed to improving access and would be satisfied to lose parking spaces to allow for dropped kerbs and better access.

8. Why cant we make a kerb higher or placing double yellow lines where the dropped kerb is to ensure that cars cannot hang over the pavement?

- These are good recommendations and should be taken to streetscene

9. When unauthorised cars park in the disabled bay on my street, why aren't they towed away?

- This is because they are not considered a priority; they are not obstructing the street.
- Towing vehicles is very expensive
- It is acknowledged that access needs for disabled people should be treated as a higher priority.

10. What is the situation with Companion Badges in other boroughs? People have been receiving tickets for parking at the end of their road not knowing that it is a boundary of Islington.

- There is not enough joined up working between the boroughs and we should identify other boroughs

Action Points

The following action points were agreed between Phillip Burns and Disability Backup;

- The chart of where you can park with which badge will be sent to Catherine to send to the members. This will also be made available on the website
- Guide to disabled parking to be sent to Disability Backup for feedback
- Disability Backup to be consulted when the Parking policy is being reviewed (estimated in 3-4 months)
- Phillip will check that the computer system is correct regarding using clock in disabled bay. He will ensure that it is known by enforcers that you do not need your clock if you are parking in your CPZ Zone with Companion Badge
- 3 Personal Issues were taken to Phillip for resolution
- Continued improvement to access to continue to be upheld. Ensuring that accessible information be available
- To raise the issue of Companion Badge use in the streets which share borough boundary and escalate this on behalf of DBU.

Any other business

- 26th June Consultation Event, booking forms available
- Hackney Museum and Service First Centre representatives will attend July's Forum Meeting on 23rd July
- Street Scene are asking for people to help with an application to make some bridges between Springfield Park and Hackney Marshes accessible
- Bikes in Hackney- John talked to the Forum about some new plans to introduce bike racks on pavements, he asks Forum members for support in Campaigning against this. He also asks for support in Campaigning against Cyclists using Parks to cycle through, at speed and causing a risk to many. Disability Backup will draft a template letter and will place it in the newsletter, John asks that people write individual letters as this can have more of an effect.