

BLOOMSBURY RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP

PROOF OF EVIDENCE 4

Stop-start traffic and consequent pollution in surrounding streets

STATEMENT

by NICKY COATES

- a) On Friday 26th May, as I left my flat on Judd Street just before 5pm, vehicles were backed up in a solid jam from Euston Road to Brunswick Square – the entire length of Judd Street and Hunter Street. Before the west-bound route on Tavistock Place was imposed in November 2015, the traffic flowed efficiently down this road and there were hardly ever jams (I would say hardly more than once a year; I actually don't remember traffic ever being like this before). This extreme congestion now often happens several times a week and the jams can last for two or three hours, or sometimes more.
- b) The vehicles, many diesel, had their engines running and you could smell the fumes from the idling engines. This is a new phenomenon, post November 2015.
- c) I timed two cars driving from Cromer Street to Euston Road between 17.05 and 17.27. One took 9 minutes 23 seconds, and the other 8 minutes 27 seconds; that is c. 8 minutes 55 seconds on average. This is a distance of 209 metres. The cars were picked at random and were typical of the progress of all the vehicles in the queue. This distance would normally take between 20 and 33 seconds to travel (based on timing 10 cars in a non-congested period); that is c.27 seconds on average.
- d) In the meantime Tavistock Place, was completely empty of cycles and cars.
- e) A traffic counter would not identify the length of time that each car in the jam spent with an idling engine in this residential street of around 400 households.
- f) So, the jams caused by the displaced traffic, resulting from the one-way system, mean that vehicles with idling engines are in this densely populated residential street for around 20 times longer than before November 2015, causing 20 times as much pollution, often for several hours a day.
- g) Certainly pollution has decreased in one street, the currently one-way Tavistock Place, but at the expense of significantly increasing pollution in surrounding streets. And since stop-start traffic causes more pollution than moving traffic, and two streets of moving traffic have now been replaced by one street of little traffic and one of very slow stop-start traffic, it would seem that the total sum of congestion and pollution, over both streets, has probably increased. The Council data will not be able to contest this since they did not monitor pollution in Judd Street, or many others which had to absorb the displaced traffic, before the trial.
- h) I must emphasise that this is a totally new phenomenon created by displaced traffic, which began the very day the west-bound route was closed in November 2015, to which contemporaneous email correspondence would attest.

**NICKY COATES WILL ALSO REFER TO STATEMENTS
SUBMITTED BY LOCAL RESIDENTS**

From Resident in Judd Street

- a) My fight for survival started a few years ago when Camden decided to implement a plan which involved the banning of north bound traffic in the section of Marchmont Street north of Tavistock Place. This resulted in traffic (including many diesel taxi cabs) taking "rat run" routes via the densely populated side streets and Judd Street. Reports following this venture referred vaguely to "some pollution readings having fallen", but did not specify precisely where such readings had been obtained. Perhaps Upper Marchmont Street?
- b) I am in the care of the chest department at University College Hospital for treatment of a chronic chest condition. The standard of care and attention I receive is beyond reproach. But the heroic efforts of the staff have to fight against against the pollutants from the displaced traffic.
- c) The situation has ben exacerbated by the recent additional changes related to the imposed one way traffic along Tavistock Place. In Judd Street we now have frequent long queues of *stationary* traffic including many taxicabs waiting for the lights to change at Euston Toad. The pollution is now horrendous. Not only the smell. One can also taste the fumes. But the most toxic component (nitrous oxide) consists of particles which are invisible and odourless. They are so small that they are absorbed into the body via the lungs. Very cunning.
- d) I wonder who will win in determining my existence (or lack of existence). UCH or Camden Council?
- e) The proposed plans involving the banning of traffic from leaving the the north end of Judd Street will only result in further chaos. Delivery vehicles will be handicapped from performing their normal function and visitor vehicles will roam the side streets looking for a "Way Out". Meanwhile residents will be able to look out on a day long "Tour de France" following the introduction of new Super Cycle Lanes.
- f) Please reverse the changes, drop the plans and leave us alone. Then we will be able to again breathe a little more freely.

David A Hill, Judd Street.

**STATEMENTS FROM TWO RESIDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED
IN BRAG'S COMMUNITY PLANNING DAY ON 8.9.16**

From Resident in Brunswick Centre

Since the trial traffic scheme has started, Hunter Street is like living on a main road. I have my bedroom and lounge door connecting me to my balcony and my doors are open 24/7, 365 days a year regardless of the weather. I can no longer sit on my balcony or tend to my few flower pots, as the fumes are off the scale, which causes me breathing problems...Most days the traffic is bumper to bumper from early morning until past 8pm. There is shouting from people with road rage and most importantly, emergency services have a lot of trouble getting through so sirens are going all the time. I think it is unfair to myself and many local residents who feel the same to be expected to live like this, and think traffic routes should be restored to the previous way. We all deserve a decent quality of life.

From Resident in Brunswick Centre

Since the Tavistock Place trial, the traffic in all surrounding areas have become gridlocked. The pollution and noise has become unbearable. My once so lovely Bloomsbury [flat] has now become a health hazard. I am 83 years old and I used to sit on the Brunswick stairs outside the cinema for hours after my walk with my dog, watching the world go by. I can no longer do that as the fumes from the traffic in Brunswick Square / Hunter Street are no good for my health, so I have to go up to my flat with my windows shut. I feel I am a prisoner in my own neighbourhood.

Photos showing congestion caused by displaced traffic in Judd Street, Handel Street, Hunter Street and Endsleigh Gardens















