

COUNCIL MEETING – DEPUTATION/PETITION REQUEST FORM

NAME OF DEPUTATION/PETITION LEADER: Sue Richards	
ADDRESS: ■ Sumatra Road London NW6 ■	
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Name and contact details of other proposed attendees (maximum of 6 plus deputation leader): Miles Seaman ■■■■■■■■■■ Pauline Swindells ■■■■■■■■■■ Janet Grauberg ■■■■■■■■■■	
Does any member of the deputation have access requirements? If so, please tell us what they are: No.	
Have you submitted a deputation request to the Council before? If so, please give details: I have not previously submitted a deputation request. The Chair of WHAT spoke at the Planning Meeting to consider the O2 Centre redevelopment in March 2023.	

Please summarise below the key points you wish to make at the Council meeting (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

West Hampstead Amenity and Transport group (WHAT) Deputation to Camden Council meeting – January 29th 2024
Request to retain scratch cards for visitor parking

This deputation is made by West Hampstead Amenity and Transport group (WHAT) representing residents concerned about the local environment in the West Hampstead area. We celebrated our 50th anniversary last year and have 181 members. However, it is supported by other community and residents' organisations across the borough, including in Belsize, South Hampstead, Kentish Town and Somers Town.

Camden's consultation document 'Healthy Streets, Healthy Travel, Cleaner, Fairer Parking' contained the proposal that scratch cards for residents' visitor parking would be discontinued and that residents currently using scratch cards would be moved to the online visitor permit. WHAT submitted a detailed response to that consultation which you can find at whatnw6.com.

This deputation urges Camden Council to retain paper based, scratch card vouchers for visitor parking across the borough – alongside the online, digital permit system. We believe this is essential if Camden's policies are to support all sections of its community.

Discriminatory Impact and Impact on Loneliness and Well being

The removal of scratch cards would have an adverse, discriminatory impact on older, vulnerable and less affluent residents, resulting in increased levels of loneliness, anxiety and stress – to the considerable detriment of well-being and independence.

As widely documented, the sole use of electronic media is a major cause of digital exclusion due to its unequal impact. When increased age is also combined with gender, living alone and some disabilities the impact is greater still. The 'Review of OFCOM's research on digital exclusion among adults in the UK' (March 2022) quoted statistics showing that one in five of those aged 70+ and living alone lacked access to a connected device in the household, as did a third of those living alone and with an impacting or limiting condition. Of those who lived alone, were aged 70+ and had an impacting or limiting condition, 60% said they didn't use the internet or have access to it at home.

Feedback from WHAT members without access to or ability to use digital devices, or to negotiate complex parking requests by telephone, confirms how the impact and resulting anxiety would be felt if scratch cards were removed. To quote just a few of the comments we've received relating to the needs of more than a hundred residents in our small area alone:

'I cannot emphasise too much how this proposal would impact our life - it is nothing more than discrimination against the older generation and against our human rights'.

'I am now over 80 and would not be prepared to use a much more complicated method which involves a telephone call and needless anxiety on my part'.

'Everything seems to be done on-line these days and I cannot cope with it. At times over the last year my mobility has been impaired and I have had to rely heavily on a couple of relatives who live where buses are very infrequent so need to drive here to help me out. If it hadn't been for a few scratch cards left I don't know what we would have done'

'...without scratch cards, I would have to go out to my visitors' car, ring from where they are parked and remember or read out their registration number. Too many numbers for me! Several of my visitors are disabled now, and would have to stand around to make the phone call, whether they could stand or not'

We appreciate Camden's wish to reduce the level of carbon based emissions from vehicles using our streets. However, we feel that the relatively small allocation of paper vouchers that will be required to meet the needs of those for whom the virtual process creates major barriers – and for those circumstances in which the digital system is wholly impractical – is justified. Residents of Camden have no control over which type of vehicle is used by their visitors, who may well live outside the Borough. As one of our members has stated: 'With the visitors permit, it is hardly likely that a visitor will change their car in order to visit me at a lower cost to me.'

Our firm conclusion is that scratch cards for visitor parking should be retained alongside the digital system if Camden is to respond to the full diversity of its residents. This need is recognised by many other London councils which retain the dual system. The vast majority of Camden residents will always need visitor parking permits – even for half hour visits. Paper based systems are best placed to deal with the many challenging situations of urban life that demand practical and flexible approaches.