

Dear ASPRA,

I received the email below before Christmas but it has taken a while to organise myself into making a response. I will send a similar email to the Secretary of ASPRA who has recently sent out notice of the AGM. Would you please forward the details to any relevant party.

I have read through a recent Residents Association magazine and the page on Traffic and pedestrian safety by Bob Sleeman caught my eye. In particular the second point regarding the extension of the controlled parking zone in Addiscombe. The parking situation in Addiscombe has been desperate for a long while now.

When we moved to Addiscombe over 20 years ago, there was no tram, no controlled parking zone and on the whole no real difficulty finding a place to park in Ashling Road. Over the years a number of elderly people without cars have either died or moved away and more families with cars have moved in. When the tram system was built, suddenly the parking situation became horrendous with out-of-town commuters parking in the surrounding roads to catch a tram into Croydon. Hardest hit were Colworth Road and Everton Road – being closest to the tram stop they filled up first. Understandably, the residents complained to the Council who did a survey across the area to see if there would be support for the introduction of a controlled parking zone.

I responded to the survey by saying I was not in favour of controlled parking mostly because at that time I saw it as the urbanisation of what used to be a nice suburban area, and I didn't see why we should have to pay to park in our own road. It seems there was not a great deal of support for controlled parking anywhere as the Council only appears to have introduced the controlled zone into Colworth Road this side of Lower Addiscombe Road. When that was announced, I wrote to Jill Adams at the Council objecting on the grounds that discouraging commuters from parking in Colworth would only move them into Ashling Road and beyond. She replied to my letter assuring me that their plans would not have a negative impact on Ashling Road. Of course it did, and now Colworth Road is virtually car free most of the time and it is even harder to find a space in Ashling Road during the day.

Other factors have come into play as well.

- Some families now have two or even three cars and assuming that you can get just one car outside one house, they take up more than their fair share of the road.
- The flats on the corner of Ashling and Lower Addiscombe Road were renovated some years ago and instead of using the space behind the flats for the residents to park in, the builders took a section of the road (equivalent to 2 parking spaces) created a dropped kerb and off-road parking spaces for the residents of the flats only.
- There are cars parked at the Lower Addiscombe Road end that are never moved (I suspect the owners live in the flats). One had a 'for sale' sign on it for months – why should someone have a free car showroom at the expense of those who live in the road? With the abolition of the Tax Disc it is much harder to monitor whether cars are parked legally or not.
- For quite a while, we had a large white truck taking up a parking space at the end of the road which was never moved but one could frequently observe the owners loading and unloading scrap metal. It was obvious they were running a scrap business and using the van as their yard. Over a period of some weeks I took photos of the activity with the intention of reporting it to the Council – however I was beaten to it by somebody else and the truck has now gone.
- On one occasion we had a large white SUV parked outside our house for several weeks while the owners took a holiday (we watched them unload suitcases and walk to the tram).

My point is that it is bad enough having to endure the thoughtlessness of commuters taking a good deal of the parking, without having the added nuisance of blatant abuse.

These days if we drive out of Ashling Road, there is no certainty at all that we will find a space anywhere in the road on our return. It is not at all unusual to have to circle the block several times before finding a place in Claremont or even Baring Road. And I don't suppose the residents there welcome us taking their parking spaces. I dare say that all the roads off Lower Addiscombe Road experience shoppers parking for short periods, but I guess that is something we have to endure if we want to keep shops in Addiscombe.

I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that the only way to improve the situation is for there to be some form of parking control introduced. One apparently successful approach is used in Bromley, where in some areas close to the town, parking is banned between 12 noon and 2pm. This discourages commuters from leaving their cars for the entire day but allows residents (with permits) to park.

I imagine the Council would prefer a pay and display scheme, as it raises revenue from parking charges as well as Resident Permits. It probably wouldn't be popular with the owners of more than one car but it seems only fair that if they are going to be using more than one space in the road that they should pay more.