**Note of meeting with Redmond Szell 16.6.15**

**Purpose:**

1. To identify issues re. improving access for older people and physically disabled people in Hampstead and SE Green, for the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

2. To ask for contacts with individuals and groups/organisations who could provide

useful input to the “improving access” theme of the HNF.

**Key issues:**

1. Pavements:

a. pedestrians are entitled to use the pavement, but pavements are being progressively encroached upon by features that primarily serve the interests of nonpedestrians (e.g. motorists, cafes and shops).

b. proliferation of cafes placing tables and chairs outside on pavements, often

without permission, obstructing pedestrian access. A lot more cafes have been doing this over the last two years. This is an issue for many pedestrians Ops using mobility scooters and people pushing buggies not just those with impaired sight.

c. many OPs in the area have AMD.

d. sandwich (advertising) boards on pavements also cause obstructions for pedestrians.

e. parking signs (indicating parking restrictions days and hours when residents’ parking is in force): the poles encroach on pavements.

f. broken paving stones particularly a problem for OPs.

g. dog mess:

i. the bright circles of paint that were being used to draw attention to dog

mess helped visually impaired people.

ii. some people are photographing errant dog owners and dogs [and

sending the photos to the council?].

2. Painting the edges of steps (e.g. outside Lloyds bank) has reduced accidents. it’s

easy to do, cheap, helps everyone.

3. Speed limits (20 mph limit on most roads in the HNF area):

a. needs stricter enforcement (e.g. paint “20 mph” on the roads, or use zig zag markings?)

b. Fitzjohn’s Avenue is particular problem: a long, straight, fast road with 13 schools on it.

4. Drivers failing to stop at pedestrian crossings:

a. put an enforcement camera on every pedestrian crossing.

b. should be automatic penalty of 6 points on licence.

5. Noise: blind people feel noise like pain. They take in the majority of their sensory

input through sound. Builders shouldn’t be allowed to work at weekends at all everyone

needs a lie-in. Basement excavations create a lot of noise.

6. LB Camden how the Council approaches access issues.

a. Camden is pretty receptive to suggestions re. disabled access.

b. Camden’s Sensory Impairment team is good. Gives advice. Has dealt effectively with problems such as zebra crossings that needed repainting and improving pelican crossing control panels.

c. Ramps outside banks and shops came in under EU access law, but Camden implemented it very quickly.

d. Pavement Enforcement [team] are generally willing to act if someone complains, but they should be more proactive, e.g. going out and checking whether cafes have permission to put tables outside.

e. The Council has been good at putting in tactile pavements near pedestrian crossings, though it’s not 100%,

**Ideas for raising awareness of access issues in the HNF area and getting further**

**input:**

1. Could the HNF set something up (e.g. a page on its website) where people could identify access issues [and discuss solutions]?

2. Raise awareness of how many people have been killed/injured each month in road accidents in Camden. It would shock people, some at least would drive more carefully as a result.

3. Gayton Residents’ Association has a newsletter, could include something on this theme of the HNF, encourage people to input.

4. Gayton Road festival/street party Sat 5th Sept 2015, 12:0017:00: we could have part of a stall there.

5. RS appears regularly on R4’s *In Touch* programme. They are keen on improving access. He could speak to Peter White (presenter) re. getting a spot on the programme about the HNF.

**Useful contacts:**

● sylvie.macle@camden.gov.uk (sensory impairment team, Camden)

● Ben van Brugen (planning expert; he’s on the HNF)

● RNIB: although they seem more focused on raising money than raising blind people’s expectations (e.g. to encourage them to go out and do more), they have some good

NEDs/advisers, e.g.

○ Paul Ryb

○ John Moss

● Henderson Court: ask sheltered housing residents about access, e.g. the pavement outside the two restaurants next to Hampstead Post Office, which is obstructed with tables. It also slopes very steeply difficult for OP to navigate.

● martincochrane@gmail.com (he runs the Gayton festival).

**Action points RS:**

1. RS to send me contact details for:

a. Hampstead shops email everything that’s happening in the area (could add

something about road accident casualties each month to raise awareness and

influence people to drive more safely).

b. John Moss (RNIB adviser).

c. Ben van Brugen.

2. RS will forward my email to Paul Ryb (RNIB NED) and ask him to contact me.

3. RS to speak to Peter White (R4 In Touch presenter) re. getting a spot on the

programme about the HNF “improving access” theme [maybe mentioning the national

context: the Localism Act 2011 applies to all local authorities in E & W)]

**Action points EN:**

1. Ask JG if useful to put something in the Gayton Residents’ Association newsletter, what we’re looking for; opportunity for residents to express their views.

2. Mention Gayton festival stall idea to JG.

3. Also mention to JG suggestion for page on HNF website where people could discuss access issues.

4. Contact https://actionforblindpeople.org.uk/supportandinformationpage/localactionteams/london/