

**DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which the relevant Cabinet Member may speak in response. The deputation will be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

**(a) Deputation concerning the grassed resident amenity space at Conway Court, Clarendon & Ellen Estate – Ms Valerie Paynter (Spokesperson)**

Built between 1965 and 1969, the Clarendon and Ellen Estate stretches the length of Clarendon Road. Flats are all either one or two bed and originally, it was those downsizing from family homes and older people who were encouraged to take up allocations to this council estate.

Housing shortages for families has meant dropping the longstanding policy of non-allocation to families with children under 12. This has brought babies and toddlers to our towerblock flats and balconies. But leaseholders with toddlers are moving in too.

Conway Court is bordered along one side by a small lawn and square at the Sackville Road end of Clarendon Road. A commercial office, the Vallance Centre, St. Barnabas Church Hall, containing the Honeycroft Nursery and Children's Centre sit directly behind it. With Resident Association blessing, pre-2007, Honeycroft has had use of the small round planters in the square for their nursery children to plant in.

The square contains large planters and small planters, benches and integral seating constructed around one of them. Council signage forbids ball games.

Conway Court mostly sits behind its car park frontage and pathways along Clarendon Road beside that corner lawn at Sackville Road. On the far eastern side of Conway Court there is a sliver of lawn by the pavement, approximately 3 metres by 10 metres.

Both lawned areas have trees in or around them. In an attempt to control dog fouling, the Council allowed the Residents Association to fence off the open lawn and add fencing to the top of the brick perimeter wall, funded by the Estate Development Budget. Bespoke dog pens were the unwanted result which non-resident dog walkers enjoy and foul, unchecked by the Council.

Honeycroft Nursery has a play area behind Conway Court by the Clinic which is a source of noise the canyoned surround seems to amplify. Some residents find it a source of disturbance they feel they have to close their windows against.

In December 2008, a Children's Centre was created with Honeycroft which has since expanded upward into the whole of the St. Barnabas Church Hall and sideways to include the clinic. They also expanded outward by creating a ground floor café with a large number of indoor covers and some outdoor tables

and chairs in the Conway Court square by theirs and the Vallance Centre's entrances.

The creation of the Children's Centre and expansion into a very confined outdoor space has brought competition for use of the bins. Honeycroft use resident bins and recycling points when their own are full. There is considerable quiet resentment from residents whose windows are just feet from the Children's Centre activity. There are 72 flats and very limited space for bins.

Decon Laboratories, to the north of the Children's Centre/Clinic area was given planning consent to demolish and redevelop with a block of offices and flats during the last Labour Administration. Within their list of Conditions, was permission to organise gain of the Conway Court lawn beside the square for THEIR outdoor amenity space. Residents of Conway Court knew nothing about this. It was a giveaway organised on the day, at the planning committee meeting, by its Chair, Les Hamilton, following a query from a committee member.

Recently Decon sought renewal of this consent. Following representations it was withdrawn. How could it be implemented when there had never been discussion with residents or the council about takeover or shared use of that dog-fouled lawn?

Even more recently, The Children's Centre sought to expand even deeper into neighbouring space. Without involving Conway Court or other residents on the Estate, they organised with the Chair of the Estate Residents Association for the Children's Centre to take over the sliver of lawn on the eastern side of Conway Court so they could plant sunflowers within the gravelled soakaway by the building and dig out boxed beds for bean growing within the lawn. To gain more planting space, the two plane tree saplings were to be removed too. The payback team, working with them, began undercoating the fencing ahead of intention to multi-colour paint it.

This little lawn sits 10 feet below a residents flat and she was very distressed when this all began. Following representations to the Council and the Residents Association the painting and digging has been temporarily halted.

Decon Laboratories wanted to invade and use Clarendon & Ellen Estate amenity space and now Honeycroft Children's Centre wants more of it too. There is just a fringe of green to soften the look of the estate and it can't be spared for use by non-residents.

This petition was signed by almost every person in Conway Court and that part of Clarendon House who opened their door to discuss it. Just 4 or 5 residents expressed a wish to see the kids given somewhere to play and that's it. Just as many other of the signatories who are parents with toddlers do not want estate space given over to this use.

Two weeks ago, the Residents Association Chair organised his one and only newsletter this year as a fightback, helped by the Council asking all the residents from all the estate to back the giveaway. Conway Court residents were the last to receive it. This is divisive and pits estate-wide residents against Conway Court residents.

We ask Councillors to please defend use of the Clarendon & Ellen Estate for residents only and not any and all comers seeking to turn our tiny fringe of green into an open public space for all comers - both Honeycroft and Decon Laboratories in particular - and to recognise that the Children's Centre has expanded far enough and needs to stop or move to more appropriate quarters.

Deputation members: John Elias, David Doige, Mrs. E. Baxter, Ralph Tiemann, Valerie Paynter, Leena Baker

*Note: an accompanying petition will also be presented.*

