

Shandon residents petition against irresponsible parking

✘ Residents in Shandon are calling for a stop to dangerous parking after a serious fire last week that left four homes in Hazelbank Terrace destroyed.

The fire on 31 August 2011 was attended to quickly by Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, but according to the residents it was merely luck that the fire appliance managed to make its way down the confined street at all.

The Shandon Colonies are overwhelmed by dangerously parked cars which the local people say is causing a serious hazard on the narrow streets. In the event of a fire or other serious incident, the emergency services struggle to get down the restricted streets.

Residents have taken a united front against dangerous parking in their neighbourhood with the help of local Greens activist, Gavin Corbett, who has set up an online petition to demand that the council works with residents to find a way of reducing the problem, and to call on police to take action against those who park irresponsibly. Almost all of the residents in the Shandon Colonies neighbourhood have signed the petition.


Locals who have signed the petition on the site have commented:-

“As a resident in the colonies, I can’t stress enough how important it is to leave enough room for the fire truck access – the recent fire tragedy in Hazelbank just heightens the importance of parking responsibly in these streets whether you are a resident or not.”

✘ Another resident added:-

“Something needs to be done soon before a life is lost because an ambulance or fire engine cannot reach a property.”

The ongoing problem in Shandon and the surrounding area was reviewed by the Council two years ago. The initial proposal was to introduce a Controlled Parking Zone but this excluded the Colonies, a decision which many feel was ill-judged.

Gavin Corbett said:- “So far they, (the council), have  excluded the colonies as they thought there was no need for it to be included in any parking restrictions, but if we had double lines at corners, marked bays and if there was some better enforcement of people who double park then it would be an improvement.

“No-one is really arguing that the devastating fire in Hazelbank Terrace would have been prevented by improvements to car-parking alone. But it has brought to the fore serious concerns about the future and the real prospect that the next time a badly-parked vehicle impedes access, it might be the difference between life and death.

“Cars parked on pavements and around corners has been a problem for years here. And local people have detailed instances where ambulances could not get access, as well as problems for funeral cars, bin lorries, buggies and wheelchairs.”

“So this petition asks the City Council to work with residents to come up with a way of reducing the parking problem and it calls on the police to take action against car-owners who park in a way that blocks access. Just as importantly, the petition calls on vehicle owners themselves to take personal responsibility for how they park. If all of these things are done together, then Shandon will be a safer and more accessible neighbourhood.”

Local Councillor, Andrew Burns, added:- “I have to say that, on balance – and particularly following the devastating impact

of the fire last week – I personally believe that the Shandon Colonies should be included in any CPZ extension.”

The current petition hopes to bring together residents, the fire service and the council to resolve the problem that is worrying so many residents .

A spokesperson for Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service said:-“We welcome the efforts of local residents to highlight the problem in a constructive manner. We will continue to engage with local communities to address some of these issues and to identify ways to resolve these on-going difficulties.”

The Shandon Colonies car parking petition can be found [here](#).

Our photos are by [Thomas Haywood](#)