

Our Manifesto

IMPROVING OUR PLACE is a campaigning group keen to improve the quality of life in and around Palmers Green, and which believes it could be a better place in which to live, work and study. Whether it's a greener environment with more trees and planted areas, better managed and safer traffic, a stronger sense of community and belonging, a thriving cultural life, or better local facilities and shopping, we think there is scope for improvement.

If you would like to contribute to the discussion forum, comment on anything or contribute in any other way, click [here](#) to find out how.

AIM

To foster a thriving, cohesive and locally focused community with Palmers Green at its heart, and an excellent quality of life for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We believe that quality of life is enhanced in strong, locally functioning communities, that buildings should be in scale, that the street scene and visual amenity matter, that residential streets are places for living not conduits for traffic, that services should be local, that more spaces for meeting and relaxation should be created, and that trees and other planting should be recognised as intrinsic to the space.

In working towards our aim we will bear in mind future challenges such as a changing climate and expensive energy.

ETHOS

We think that Palmers Green can become a family-focused local centre, providing good shopping facilities for everyday living, cafes, restaurants and pubs for quiet relaxation, and venues for musical and artistic events. In the summer months Broomfield Park in particular – being close to the heart of Palmers Green – could provide a venue for larger musical and family events for all ages.

PARTNERS

We will seek to make common cause with local politicians, organisations such as business, conservation and health groups, and to work with Enfield Council, other government established organisations, and local formal and informal groups

DECISION MAKING AND GOVERNANCE

We believe that as many choices as possible should be made by local communities.

We will:

- in concert with other interest groups (business associations, cultural and conservation groups, etc), work with Enfield Council to find ways of ensuring that local preferences are adopted;
- investigate whether establishing a parish council centred on Palmers Green would be in the interest of residents, and
- bear in mind that the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 created the opportunity for the law to be changed in favour of local preferences.

VOLUNTEERING

The members of the IMPROVING OUR PLACE organising group will be undertaking voluntary work in the streets and parks in and around Palmers Green as a way of achieving improvements and promoting civic pride.

We:

- commend volunteering as a means of achieving results and strengthening the community, and
- will advocate it as a route to community cohesion.

STREETS

Evidence shows that the strongest communities thrive where traffic serves the community rather than dominates it.

We will campaign:

- for safer, quieter, healthier streets where children gain independence and make their own way to school at an earlier age, where it is a pleasure to acquire health, social and air quality benefits by walking or cycling more often, where communities are not divided, and where local shops can thrive;
- for a default 20mph speed limit with locally tailored design characteristics to meet the above objectives;
- to ensure that the needs of pedestrians enjoy equal priority with cyclists and motorists;
- to ensure that children can be independent and safe on the streets,
- to tailor traffic calming methods to specific situations (physical changes to the road, re-assessment of parking arrangements, Shared Space and Pedestrian Priority schemes);

- to extend pavement space (where appropriate), and to employ street planting, especially trees, as a traffic calming tool and means of improving the street experience for pedestrians;
- for residential streets to be seen as the natural home for community activities such as streets parties and performance;
- to improve street scene by reducing clutter;
- for the use of car clubs as a means of easing parking pressure;
- to improve air quality, and
- to foster community interaction in the streets by, for example, providing pavement seating.

Each street has its own personality – residential streets are primarily places for living whilst through roads are likely to be residential in places, retail and business orientated in others, conduits for traffic usually – but we believe that all are capable of being made fit for community life. Given good design and planning journey times need not be affected.

WALKING

Walking is the most convenient and healthy way of travelling short journeys, the best way to explore the locality, a way of introducing children to varied environments, and causes no pollution.

We will:

- work to return streets to a situation where walking is a safe pleasure, and
- campaign to identify walking routes through quiet streets, parks, open spaces and along New River

SOCIAL AREAS

Southgate Green stands out as a Social Area. Here people already shop locally and congregate to relax. The reasons are clear: it's green with trees, the social space is well away from the traffic and it's served by several convenience stores and a variety of restaurants. It would be improved in safety, noise and air quality by a 20mph speed limit.

We will campaign:

- to establish places with a similar role in other localities in the area;
- to begin with the space on Aldermans Hill between Old Park Rd and the east side of Green Lanes which incorporates the Triangle.
- to create a similar space at the north end of the area and possibly at the eastern end.

PALMERS GREEN

Palmers Green is key to creating a locally focused and sustainable community but struggles to fulfil the role. Retailers believe that a key problem is lack of parking, but realistically that cannot be remedied. It's therefore necessary to find alternative ways of enhancing Palmers Green's role as the focus of the community in terms of services, successful retail outlets and cultural expression

We will:

- support retailers in finding new ways of attracting trade;
- promote the importance of shopping locally within the community;
- work to improve the experience of walking and cycling to the shops, and making it possible for unaccompanied children to do so;
- work to make the shopping area more attractive to shoppers by improving the visual ambience, calming traffic, widening pavements and street planting, and working with the traders on promotional events, and
- promote the Farmers Market as a service to the community, (an investment in local sustainability and as a beacon of local sustainability).

ART AND PERFORMANCE

We define art in the widest possible way, and believe that insufficient attention is paid to its place in community life, notably by Enfield Council which seems to have little interest in encouraging local talent or attracting other amateur and professional performers.

We will:

- campaign to persuade Enfield Council to make better use of its facilities, including the parks, and especially Broomfield Park which is close to the heart of Palmers Green;
- work with others to strengthen and extend local performance and participation, and
- support the annual Festival in the Park.

PARKS

Parks can play a big part in quality of life and physical wellbeing, and we think it is extraordinary that access is very often barred to unaccompanied children by un-calmed traffic. Broomfield Park, with an access adjacent to the heart of Palmers Green, the focus of the community, is an especially troubling case in point.

With rising summer temperatures now inevitable the cooling effect of trees is gaining in importance everyday. Parks play their part in reducing London's heat island effect.

We will:

- promote the importance of parks;

- campaign to ensure that roads giving access to parks are among the first to be subject to traffic calming measures;
- work towards ensuring that their full potential is exploited, including their potential to acquaint young people with the natural world by managing a proportion of the space as wildlife areas;
- promote the idea of establishing park orchards of large fruit trees underplanted with wild flower meadow;
- encourage their use for public events such as outdoor theatre and concerts;
- engage with others in bringing Broomfield House back to life.

TREES

The importance of street trees to urban living and a sustainable future cannot be over-estimated: enhanced appearance, air-conditioning effects, shade, improved air quality, habitat, carbon sequestration, reduced heat loss from neighbouring buildings, oxygen production, and, not least, local identity.

We will:

- support the Council's tree planting programme in as many ways as possible, including physical help with watering newly-planted trees, and
- work with others to secure donated funds to maximise planting.

BUILDINGS

Buildings are the backdrop to urban living and key to our sense of place.

We will:

- campaign for the extension of conservation areas and a more thoughtful approach to the appearance of buildings everywhere;
- advocate a greater emphasis on the appearance of shops and other premises in Palmers Green as part of attracting custom.

LITTER AND NOISE

Litter and noise degrade an area; litter is especially corrosive in its effect in retail and other community areas.

We will:

- support the Council's campaign to reduce litter;
- work in the community to reduce the amount of litter created and to emphasise the relationship between litter and civic pride;
- physically contribute to the removal of litter and recycle it where possible, and

- review sources of noise source by source, notably road and aircraft noise, to establish what can be done to reduce them.

HEALTH

Health is about far more than treatment and we believe that our proposals for locally focused and sustainable living will contribute much. Calmed traffic enables safer walking and cycling, enhancing the chance of independent exercise for young people. The more people walk and cycle the more air quality is improved and the less of a health threat it becomes. Planting trees and shrubs has a beneficial effect on air quality.

CRIME

Crime affects the use made of local amenities and the willingness to walk and cycle. The failure of people to walk, cycle and simply be in the streets facilitates crime. It's a circular argument. Furthermore, because people are repelled by unattractive places, crime thrives where shops are boarded up in the evenings and weekends.

We will:

- encourage the police to support a campaign to open up the streets to pedestrians in the late evening;
- explore ways of avoiding premises being boarded up in the evenings, perhaps by invoking the Sustainable Communities Act to change insurance law.

SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental and ecological issues can be expected to climb the agenda year on year.

We will:

- apply a test of sustainability to all our proposals, and
- support projects which enhance understanding of the issue of sustainability