

Dear All,

RE: Reply to some of the responses made towards the planning application for Unit 23-24 Cheriton, Queens Crescent London NW5 4EZ

Parking:

Not many users of the centre are drivers. Most of them are local and they walk to attend the centre services. Some drivers visit the market for shopping and while they are in the area they tend to visit the centre to offer their prayers. The prayers are spread during the day; two to three times and each individual one lasts for not more than 10 minutes except the Friday prayer which tend to finish within 30 minutes from its start. The people who come to the market on Thursday and Saturday come despite the centre offering prayer service or not. They arrange their parking as any other shopper will do. The rest of the week also people come to shop as there are lot of different shops on Queen's Crescent. There are some users who also drive for living, like mini cap drivers. They come to eat and/or drink to some of the restaurants and cafes in the area. If anyone of them wants to offer their prayers they will be able attend the centre. Again they come to the area despite the centre offering a prayer services or not.

The area has some of the restricted parking spaces in the borough. For example in the vicinity of the centre, the Queens Crescent has a parking restriction (8.30-18.30 Mon-Fri), Maldon Road has (Pay and Display) 8.30-18.30 Mon-Fri) and (Residence Permit 8.30-18.30 Mon-Fri) and few mixed residence and trades parking permit ((8.30-18.30 Thru-Sat and 9.00-11.00 Mon, Tue, Wed and Fri), Sunday the whole area is free.

For the last four years which we have been using the centre, the parking was not an issue. We have never received any complaint about it from the neighbours either directly or through the State Manager whom we have a regular contact and good working relationship.

It is inconceivable that someone risks fine of up to £130 to just attend few minutes of prayer. It did not happen and it is impossible given the financial situation of the majority of the users.

Noise

The centre does not use any music, or loud noise and the users always conduct their prayers as quiet as possible. As stated in our application to the planning department we are only requesting to use the centre as a prayer facility between the hours of normal use. During those hours prayers that fall within are quiet and do not need to use any microphone. The only prayer that may require for the use of the microphone is the Friday prayer. The reason is only to communicate with those users who are in the basement and it only lasts for about 30 minutes maximum. During the year the Friday prayer happens anytime between 12.30-2.00pm.

To reduce the impact of people who are attending the centre to the neighbours the centre always encourages users to refrain from any gathering outside of the centre, be the main entrance or the space outside the parade. The rear exit doors are mostly used for emergency and limited usage for female users who opt out to use the main entrance for personal reasons such as not to go down the stairs or pass in front of male users.

We have cameras pointing out the vicinity of the centre both outside of the main entrance and the rear emergence doors. Any user found standing, let alone causing nuisance has been and will be warned and any persistent offender banned from the centre.

Litters

We have never come across any litter problem for the last few years we have been using the centre. The centre does not offer food normally, except the month of Ramadan (the Muslim fasting) where we serve breaking fast every day during the month for the benefit of those who cannot afford to get a decent meal.

Most of our users are non smokers and those who do have to clean themselves before they attend a prayer. That is a condition for their prayer being accepted however in very limited incidents when someone seen outside smoking they been told off and ordered to clear any cigarette stub left behind. We always encourage a sustainable clean environment mindset for our staff, volunteers and users as well. We use again the cameras to check any litter problem and deal it accordingly.

Other nuisances

The centre users are not allowed to urinate outside of the centre or anywhere other than a proper toilet. The simple reason is that, as stated above, one of the conditions for Muslim prayers to be accepted is the person, who is offering the prayer, has to be clean. That means washing out anything that is coming out of your body including urine. The centre has three toilets for the benefit of staff and users and there is no reason for a user to go out and urinate in the local rubbish bins.

Generally our users are polite, kind and respectable people who come for the centre to please their preferred God. The teaching of Islam and the centre rules forbid any worshiper to cause harm to anybody else or worse the neighbours.

The centre also provides services to women, young people, elderly and disabled including people with some degree of mental health issue. Although most of our users are not violent in any shape or form and (we have not been informed any incident so far), if any instance happen before we are apologising unreservedly to the poor soul who was the receiving end of it. We are ready to work with the neighbours and authority to avoid any future incident likely to happen.

Although there are other Islamic centres in the area especially one in Weedington Road NW5, they are over capacity and do not offer facilities for women. This centre is force for good and helps the local people including children, young people, women, elderly and disabled. We also run activities outside the centre such as visiting hospitals, prisons, sports for young people and home visits to those who are house bound.

Kind Regards,

M. Hassan

Director

SCDT