



Belsize Village

Clean Belsize Village

*A community service initiative of the
Belsize Village Business Association*

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Report Author:

Robert Stephenson-Padron

Co-coordinator

Belsize Village Business Association (BVBA)

info@belsizevillage.org.uk

The old Belsize Village



Belsize Terrace, May 28, 2020

The new Belsize Village



Belsize Terrace, April 14, 2021

“[I]n the last 10 years [Belsize Village] had lost the old vibe and looked pretty sad with an almost constant pile of rubbish left every day in the top of the village square. Last year a group of hard working and wonderful people from the village community decided to do something about improving the sad, grotty-looking, square. These are courageous people. Amid a pandemic they cleaned and made our once grotty square beautiful and turned it in to a space for children to play or a meeting place for the community to hang out and interact with each other over a coffee. There’s plenty of seating and space.”

**Louise Lawson, local resident of nearly 40 years
March 26, 2021**

“As someone who has lived in Belsize Village for more than 57 years, I have to say that the village is looking the cleanest it has ever... Prior to this amazing transformation the square was so dirty that I wouldn’t take my grandchildren there. Now it is a delight and one that last year was a saviour for many people’s mental health and has given Belsize Village a throbbing community heart that previously was missing.”

Patricia Pearce, local resident

April 15, 2021

About the Belsize Village Business Association



Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick, Aya Khazaal, Robert Stephenson-Padron and Cllr Oliver Cooper on July 30, 2020: Belsize Village Streatory



Aya Khazaal, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and Robert Stephenson-Padron on November 5, 2018: Living Wage Week.



Robert Stephenson-Padron with now-Prime Minister Boris Johnson on November 4, 2013: Living Wage Week.

The Belsize Village Business Association was established in October 2018 as a community service project of Belsize Village-based social care provider Penrose Care Ltd and Belsize Village beauty salon Pivoine Ltd to revitalise Belsize Village which had sustained continued economic decline over a number of years through to 2018. **The overarching aim is to boost Belsize Village's economic vibrancy sufficiently so that all local businesses are able to pay their workers the London Living Wage** like Penrose Care, the pioneer of ethical home care in the UK and one of the first home care providers in the UK to become an Accredited Living Wage Employer. This is to provide a reachable goal of building a community that durably respects human dignity and strives to pursue the common good.

Predominately through the use of innovative marketing initiatives, the project led to a substantial increase in footfalls to Belsize Village and as of about October 2019, has been hailed as a success. The association boasts the active participation of most of the businesses in Belsize Village. Our success sadly came to a halt in March 2020 when the COVID-19 lockdown measures severely harmed the local economy. Positively, on July 4, 2020, the association launched the Belsize Village Streatory which permits alfresco dining on Belsize Village terrace square for local hospitality venues which on the 2nd weekend of operation (July 11, 12) boasted 100% occupancy throughout the days. The success of the Belsize Village Streatory led to a comprehensive revitalisation of Belsize Village and garnered Belsize Village's first ministerial visit in modern history, eliminated environmental blights that mired Belsize Village for over 10 years, saved over 100 hospitality jobs, increased the number of Accredited Living Wage Employers in Belsize Village, created a new town centre in north London that did not exist prior to the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020-21, and prevented any business losses in Belsize Village during the Coronavirus pandemic and in fact led to the addition of two new businesses. In February 2022, the Belsize Village Streatory became the first scheme of its kind to be made permanent in British history.

The association has over 30 members, has no membership fees and its legal entity is the Belsize Village Estate CIC. The association has two volunteer co-coordinators, Aya Khazaal and Robert Stephenson-Padron, who aim to direct community initiatives across the business community through consensus and voluntary participation

Co-coordinators of the Belsize Village Business Association

Aya Khazaal

Co-coordinator

Day job: Owner, Pivoine Nail Spa

Robert "Bob" Stephenson-Padron

Co-coordinator

Day job: Managing Director, Penrose Care

Background of Clean Belsize Village

The Belsize Village Business Association's Clean Belsize Village initiative consists of two elements that developed out of its efforts to organise and manage the Belsize Village Summer Streatery which commenced July 4, 2020: 1) developing a temporary and hopefully a permanent solution to the historic recurring rubbish mound that had blighted the top of Belsize Village terrace square for 10+ years and 2) developing a long-term solution endemic flytipping and littering which has long mired Belsize Village.

Location of Belsize Village (part of the NW3 post code area in north London):



Source: http://www.belsizevillage.co.uk/PDF/belsize_conservation_area.pdf

Section 1: Eliminating the Historic Rubbish Mound on Belsize Village terrace square and fox leakages

According to Amit of Lexington's in Belsize Village, Belsize Village has suffered from a long-standing recurring rubbish mound on Belsize Village terrace square for at least 25 years (it has been widely confirmed it has existed at least for 10 years). The rubbish mound is caused by accumulated rubbish from residents, businesses and random fly tippers who had historically placed rubbish on the top of the village square. Due to frequent missed rubbish collections from Veolia, the rubbish mound would at times stay on the square all day long, staining the ground black and filling the square with a putrid smell. The mound looked like this but at times could be significantly larger:



Belsize Village Terrace, June 27, 2020, 17:15: Example of the legacy waste issue.



Belsize Village Terrace, July 1, 2020, 7:06am: Example of the legacy waste issue. One of the last photos taken of the historic rubbish mound.

In June 2020 and early July 2020, Robert Stephenson-Padron, co-coordinator of the Belsize Village Business Association, and Nicky Ezer, head of events of Camden Council, worked successfully together to clear the historic rubbish mound as it would have prevented the Belsize Village Summer Streatory from commencing on July 4, 2020 due to the putrid smell the mound emanated and the fact that it blocked key counter-terrorism mechanisms of the event: the heavy wooden planters.



Belsize Village square, July 5, 2020, 8:14am: Following the beautification of the square and the new waste disposal system

SOLVING THE RUBBISH MOUND

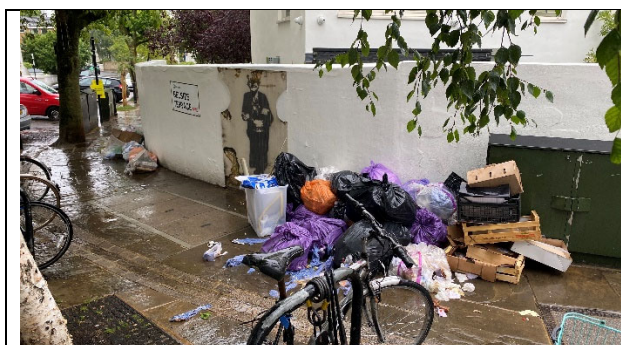
1. Sometime on the week of June 29, 2020, at the behest of Nicky Ezer, council waste enforcement officers visited various business venues informing them to start leaving their rubbish against the

wall along the square where the Bambi street artwork is located rather than the top of the square as this was far enough to ensure that on a day a collection was missed, people would not be able to smell the rubbish on the main square. Further, it was a pathway wide enough to sustain the rubbish.

2. On July 3, 2020, Nicky Ezer sent out a team to deep clean the square. The result was the black stains from the historic rubbish mound were removed and the square turned from a darkish black / grey colour to a vibrant orange-ish colour. It is amazing to see!
3. On the same day, Robert Stephenson-Padron concluded a waste collection service from First Mile whereby they would make site-wide collections **picking up all rubbish, regardless of bin bag or rubbish type** from 11pm-12pm each night. Veolia customers (Roni's, Village Pharmacy) has their rubbish taken away 7pm-10pm by Veolia. The first collection of the new service was passed midnight on July 4/5, 2020 and the morning of July 5, 2020 marked the first day in many years that you could wake up in Belsize Village and not see the rubbish mound.
4. On July 5, 2020, the Belsize Village Business Association put laminated notices up around the village to instruct locals how to abide by the new waste disposal system. This was following an email from a local resident saying that residents were still fly-tipping in front of SPOT. Since a few days after posting these notices and promoting awareness on social media, compliance with the new system has been almost 100%.
5. Currently there are two commercial collects to our communal bins: 7-8am by First Mile and 9-10pm by First Mile.

SOLVING FOX-INDUCED RUBBISH LEAKAGES

6. On July 13, 2020, The Belsize Village Business Association secured the price of a further improved system to eliminate fox-induced rubbish leakages whereby:
 - First Mile on July 15 supplied three eurobins and a fourth came shortly after.
 - If we wish to eventually buy the bins, they are £300 (ex VAT) outright. There was demand from local residents for us to paint any bins we procure for the village. Following obtaining planning permission on March 22, 2021 for bin covers, the BVBA painted the bins magnoli to match the background wall.
7. Although planning permission was obtained on March 22, 2021 for our proposed bin covers, planning's decision to only grant 12-month temporary planning permission made spending over £15,000 on the proposed bin storage structure imprudent and therefore it has not yet been built. However, in December 2021, local councillors of Frognal and Fitzjohn's ward approved a £20,000 CIL grant to build the structure which is pending Camden Council planning to make the decision which is supported by our local community by an overwhelming amount via consultation (88%) – making our bin structures permanent. This consultation involved a site notice on the 25/11/2020 and the consultation period expired on the 19/12/2020. A press notice was advertised on 26/11/2020 and expired on 20/12/2020.



With no bins, July 8, 2020 7:02am



With bins, August 9, 2020 10:29am

What we do to mitigate issues when they arise with respect to the four eurobins on Belsize Terrace

The bin system has the following main challenges:

8. **The bins are visual blights.** To mitigate this in the interim we have painted them to match the background wall. However much of the paint has come off and we need to repaint them. The best long-term solution is to make our bin covers planning approval (2020/4413/P) permanent which would eliminate the visual blight the bins cause and enhance the conservation area by adding more greenery to the village and ensuring the historic rubbish mound does not return.
9. **Residential and builders flytipping.** To mitigate this issue, we have a legally-compliant CCTV system. We report any cases of flytipping on the Love Clean Streets app.
10. **Overflows and leakages:** The porters of the various hospitality venues are supported by five Clean Belsize Village volunteers, mostly local residents, who periodically check the four bins, sort out overflows and clear litter as soon as spotted. Litter and cleaning equipment is stored nearby at Roni's Bagel Bakery.
11. **Missed collections:** Missed collections had not been an issue 2020-2021 although they have become an issue in 2022. As of April 4, 2022, we have had 8-morning waste collections missed in 2022 vs 3 missed collections for the whole of 2021. In each of these 8 occasions, one of our Clean Belsize Village volunteers or venue porters eliminated any resulting visual blight by tidying overflows, reported the missed collections and the 7am-8am missed collections were collected 11am-1pm. BVBA also continues to work with First Mile to resolve whatever is causing their recent spike in missed morning collection.



Belsize Village square, March 1, 2022, 23:18: Bins nice and tidy but can clearly see permanent planning permission for our bin covers would not only eliminate their visual blight but also enhance the conservation area by adding greenery to Belsize Terrace and ensuring the many years of Belsize Village being mired by continuous filth never returns. Note it would be ideal if the Belsize Terrace street sign is moved to above the BT utility box.

(Copy of the new waste system posted around the village in July 2020):



Belsize Village

Do you want to wake up to this?



Belsize Village square, July 1, 2020, 7:06am: Example of the legacy waste issue.

Or this?



Belsize Village square, July 5, 2020, 8:14am: First morning after the new waste disposal system established by the Belsize Village Business Association whereby a second collection has been arranged in the afternoon and night to pick up all bags irrespective of type or waste company. This is costing us £72 per day but solves the issue that has mired the village for at least 10 years. Our funding for the project is only until the end of September 2020 so please contact your local councillors to fund the project permanently.

If the latter, please now place your rubbish here, not the top of the square



Section 2: Bin the butt / Anti-littering campaigns

On Thursday, July 9, 2020, the Belsize Village Streatory closed early due to rain. As a result, the event manager, Robert Stephenson-Padron, led a surgical clean-up of Belsize Village spanning parts of Belsize Lane, the bottom of Belsize Crescent, Belsize Terrace square and road, and Belsize Place (historically the most filthy part of Belsize Village). It yielded a huge amount of cigarette butts:



Belsize Village, July 9, 2020: Results of the first surgical litter pick up revealing a large number of cigarette butts

In response, the Belsize Village Business Association began raising awareness of the toxic plastic pollution from cigarette butts on three of its social media platforms (stats as of 16 April 2021):

- Our @belsizevillage Facebook account which has over 700 followers
- Our @belsizevillage Instagram account which has over 4,500 followers
- Our @belsizevillage Twitter account which has over 4,300 followers

Physical notices were also put up in the village:



On the same night the surgical litter pick-ups began (July 9, 2020), the Belsize Village Business Association communicated over Twitter with Cllr Adam Harrison, the Cabinet Member for Improving Camden's Environment, and were made aware of the #binthebutt campaign after which we used the campaign name to promote our clean-up efforts of the cigarette butts and indeed, varied litter, around Belsize Village. The results of the environmental clean-up campaign were swift and effective. By the morning of July 13, 2020, there was a significant reduction in cigarette butt pollution solely through social media communication / marketing.

Below you will see the successive decline in cigarette butts collected from:

- Belsize Lane (McCrone Mews to Belsize Mews)
- The bottom of Belsize Crescent
- Belsize Terrace square and road areas
- Belsize Place (the area historically most filthy in Belsize Village along with the top of Belsize Village terrace square)

Results of the surgical litter pick-up post the first night of July 9, 2020:



July 10, 2020: morning cleanup results



July 11, 2020: morning cleanup results



July 12, 2020: morning cleanup results

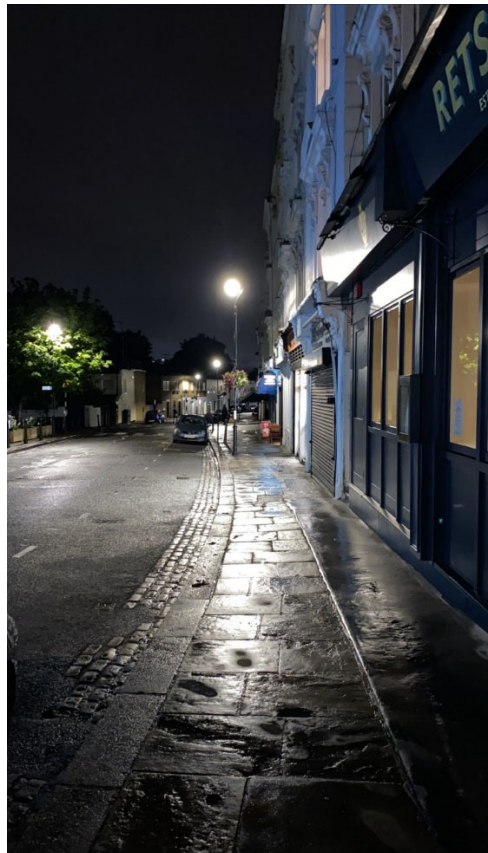
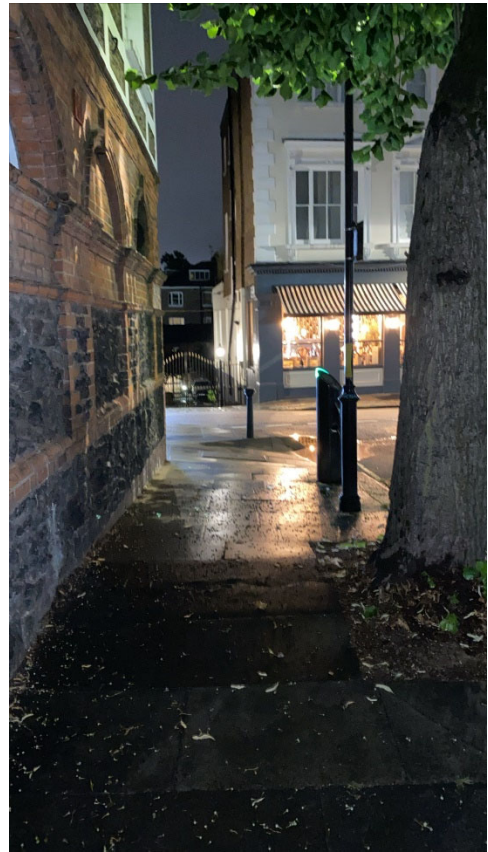


July 13, 2020: morning cleanup results showing a significant reduction. SUCCESS!!!



September 27, 2020: The Great NW3 September Clean which included six local Camden Council councillors

The areas around Belsize Place after the first clean-up of July 9, 2020. Belsize Place is historically known as the filthiest part of Belsize Village. Here it is, very clean indeed!



Increasing the number of Camden Council public waste bins to reduce cigarette butt pollution

On July 13, 2020, Roberto Molinari of the Street and Environment Enforcement team of Camden Council, made contact with Robert Stephenson-Padron, co-coordinator of the Belsize Village Business Association offering assistance to Clean Belsize Village. Notably, Mr. Molinari requested the areas where public waste bins should be placed to help reduce the toxic plastic pollution of cigarette butts. Following are the locations the Belsize Village Business Association is recommending for the placement of new public waste bins with cigarette disposal facilities. Due to an embargo on new litter bins, the new bins were never placed.

Northwest side of Belsize Lane



In front of Hazara nearer to Retsina



Outside the Lauderette



On the corner of Crescent Fruiters

Southeast side of Belsize Lane



In between Calici and Bourne's



Outside Roni's near the red post box but so not as to disturb those departing the disabled parking pay



On this corner of the terrace square



Between McCrone Mews and Baynes Mews



The corner of OmniDe

Section 3: Current challenges

- Securing permanent planning permission for communal business bins which will allow us to get funding for the associated bin covers.
- Continued high levels of littering mainly from smokers and parents/children (candy wrappers, popsicle sticks).
- High levels of residential flytipping from residents between 64-72A Belsize Lane, 50-60A Belsize Lane and Belsize Place
- House-based residents not putting all waste in bin bags which causes waste to blow around the community.
- Still occasional issues of residents putting bags out at night (especially persistent at 54 Belsize Lane).

Appendix 1: Joint letter of the Belsize Village Business Association praising our successful revitalisation



Letters Editor, Camden New Journal

March 15, 2021

Dear Editor:

BELSIZE VILLAGE AN EXEMPLAR OF COMMUNITY REVITALISATION

In the last year, Belsize Village has been transformed thanks to businesses and residents working hand in hand. This renaissance can be traced back to the foundation of the Belsize Village Business Association (BVBA) in 2018. The BVBA is a voluntary organisation made up of local businesses. Members are not charged fees, it is run by volunteers, and its sole purpose is to promote and improve Belsize Village.

Last summer, with funding from local councillors and incredible resident volunteer power, the BVBA created a beautiful space for the whole community. This culminated in the fantastically successful Stretery, which helped save several businesses and over 100 local jobs. We plan to relaunch the Stretery on April 13, 2021, following overwhelming support from our community noted in multiple consultations. Historically, Belsize Village has been marred by multiple closed shops, but through the collective efforts of the BVBA and the community, Belsize Village will soon celebrate having no vacancies for the first time in recent memory.

The BVBA also aims to make Belsize Village the cleanest town centre in Camden. For over ten years, a large recurring rubbish mound had sat atop the village square, blighting Belsize Village and deterring footfall. The BVBA working closely with the community to remove the rubbish mound, jet-washed the pavement, and installed new garden planters – adding beauty and security to the village square. Further, a communal commercial waste collection was created with four bins that are emptied twice daily. These bins, although not perfect, have helped end the problem of foxes tearing the bags and leaving the streets strewn with rubbish. Our original clean-up has been followed by ongoing litter reduction campaigns and volunteer litter pickups.

The importance of this community-wide teamwork has been demonstrated in recent weeks. When roadworks stopped routine waste collections happening, the old fly-tipping problems resumed. But thanks to proactivity by community volunteers and a direct relationship with First Mile through BVBA, the problem was brought under control and the streets have now returned to being clean. Under the old approach, similar issues would persist for weeks or months.

We are proud of Belsize Village's revitalisation, as is most of our community. As local businesses, we are grateful to residents for their support and fully endorse the BVBA's efforts to make Belsize Village the most attractive town centre in the borough.

Yours Sincerely,

Belsize Village Business Association

Signed: Admiral Property, Belsize Organic, BodyMatters Clinic, Bourne's Fishmongers, Brod Wight Architects, Calici, Charro de Rio, Ergotec Physiotherapy, Fine Art Consultancy, Hazara, Hazel Collins Design, Heywoods Estate Agents, Oliver's Village Café, OmniDe, Retsina, Roni's, PropertyTime, Penrose Care, Physio Ed Medical, Pivoine Nail Spa, Pyramid Dry Cleaners, Tahera, TETA's, Village Pharmacy and XUL Architecture

Appendix 2: Happy photos

With the clean up of Belsize Terrace, Camden has a new town centre it did not have before July 2020

The Belsize Village Streatory has “created in Belsize Village a centre that frankly, I don’t think really existed there before.”

Cllr Steve Adams

March 12 2021



Belsize Terrace: March 12, 2021, 16:21

Despite cold weather, the Belsize Village Streatory 2021 is already off to a strong start



Belsize Terrace: April 12, 2021, 20:09