

ITEM No 3

414 Lanark Rd.,
Edinburgh
EH 13 0LU
12 Jan 04

Dear Mr Stackhouse,

As agreed on the phone this morning, I enclose a brief account of the problems we aim to raise with the local Pentlands Committee at its meeting in Currie High School at 7pm on Thursday 29 January. I hope this is suitable for circulation to the Committee prior to its meeting.

I expect a small number of us will attend as a deputation to give further information, and to answer questions.

Yours faithfully,

Scott Hunter.

Vandalism on Lanark Road

For many decades the houses at 406 and 410 Lanark Rd - and to a greater or lesser extent other houses in the neighbourhood too - have been subjected to spasmodic vandalism. These two houses are on the north side of the Lanark Rd, on either side of the footpath where it emerges onto the Lanark Rd from Wester Hailes.

The severity of the problem has varied from year to year.

In 2002 and 2003 (mostly in the Summer and Autumn of that year) it flared up again. Private property was invaded; rocks were thrown causing considerable damage to houses and parked vehicles; threats were made against house owners; buses and cars on the Lanark Rd were on occasion stoned; and refuse bins awaiting collection overturned.

The nature of the vandalism in the summer of last year gave rise to real fears of serious injury in the houses under attack, and even to fears of death on the road. At that point the speed limit is 40 mph, and the broad curving configuration of the road as it passes the entrance to the lane is such that the limit seems frequently to be exceeded by vehicles travelling in both directions.

Specific acts of vandalism were brought to the attention of the Police, and we received a number of visits from Police officers. From informal conversations with them we are led to understand that the lane has also been the means of access and escape for a small number of young people who are thought to have carried out acts of vandalism in the Spylaw area, and perhaps further afield as well. (The lane is also on occasion used as a secluded area for drinking, and is frequently littered with empty bottles).

The Police will clearly have a much more comprehensive overview of the problem than we can possibly possess.

But from our perspective the problem seems to centre on the use of the footpath by a small number of aggressively anti social young people.

Accordingly we sought and on 25 November obtained a meeting with Cllr Brian Meek, accompanied by Council officials.

The outcome of that meeting was that:-

- Cllr Meek would further liase with the Police,
- a survey of the usage of the footpath would be carried out,
- there would be discussions with the Housing Department,
- the use of CCTV would be explored,

- local opinion would be canvassed on the possible closure of the footpath, and in this connection we note that canvass forms have been circulated for return by 31 January.** And finally,
- Cllr Meek suggested we might attend the next meeting of the Pentlands Development Committee*.

** Interpretation of the results of the survey must take account of the fact that those canvassed are given no indication on the survey form of the problems that gave rise to the closure proposal, and why the closure proposals arose. Only those living in close proximity to the lane are likely to understand the extent to which its existence contributes to the problems of vandalism outlined above.

DSJ 11 Jan 03