

Comments on Veolia's performance

South Ridgway Residents Association

Dear Sir.

I am sorry to say I will be unable to attend the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, but have been told a written submission will suffice.

I am the chairman of the South Ridgway Residents Association, we have about 420 members.

The general view is that now everyone has got used to the re cycling and waste collection system is that it works very well.

I would also like to congratulate the Council on their reaction to fly tipping. I find the system good and the reaction time very impressive.

Street cleaning however is an unmitigated disaster. There is an obsession with using machines, which fill up very fast and obviously cannot operate where cars are parked. Whenever, on the rare occasions an operative is sent out with a broom and bags the streets are well cleaned. You really should all go and have a look at Arterberry Road, full gutters and blocked drains. This has been the case for most of this year. Whenever this has been reported there has been a vague attempt to clear the easier parts and the rest of the road cast into outer darkness.

There has recently been an operative clearing weeds in the gutters in Langham and Montana Roads, this has been quite successful but unless the gutters are then sprayed with weed killer rather pointless.

This brings me on to my next point. Last November when the leaves were lying about a foot deep an operative on another machine came round spraying weed killer. One can assume he was supposed to be spraying gutters etc. All he was doing was spraying piles of dead leaves. Total waste of time and money. Why on earth not wait until the leaves are clear then send out someone with a tank on their back to spray the relevant areas. Again another use of an expensive and ultimately useless machine.

Lastly leaves. I live in Montana Road and we have a road full of magnificent London Planes, we all love them. They should be pollarded annually not bi annually. There would be fewer leaves for the operatives to clear up !

I really hope something can be done about street cleaning, we have several voluntary litter pickers in our area, but it is about time the Council did their bit.

I look forward to hearing the conclusions the panel comes to.

Yours faithfully.

William Petch.

Chairman South Ridgway Residents Association.

Edge Hill Court Residents

Dear Rosie

My neighbour Sally Gibbons has been in touch with you about the forthcoming Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning Panel, taking place on 3 September. She tells me that you have informed her that written submissions to the panel from eligible representative organisations are acceptable, and that we can send these to you so that you can ensure each member of the panel gets a copy.

I am unable to attend, but would like to make a submission as a director of Edge Hill Court Ltd, which is the freehold managing company of Edge Hill Court in Edge Hill, Wimbledon SW19. I hope it is acceptable to do this by means of this email, but if you would prefer a more formal Word document, please let me know. I write on behalf of the entire Board of the company, and the owners and residents of this 88 block of apartments receiving the services of Merton Council on street cleaning and waste disposal.

I have lived in our apartment in Edge Hill Court now for 27 years, and have watched the waste and street cleaning services progressively deteriorate over that period. In recent years, they are the worst I have experienced. I have written on behalf of our residents many times about the problems and have often received little or no response, and issues have either not been resolved, resolved only partially, or only after a protracted period.

The most recent example is a complaint I made about the recycling collection lorry, which on two consecutive weeks somehow shed a huge number of shards of glass from the vehicle, all around our inner driveway, and out along Darlaston Road and Edge Hill. It is possible that the glass was to be found further afield as well, but I didn't look that far. I found that there was no phone number to call on the website, and no obvious way to make a complaint about the waste disposal service, which has been terrible since Veolia took over. The only recourse I seemed to have was to write an online complaint to the street cleaning service on the council. This I did after the first spillage, but after two weeks, nothing has been done, the glass is still there, and this morning my partner's bicycle tire was punctured by one of the pieces of glass left on the road.

We often see spillages of waste materials after the collection has been made, and the collectors seem unwilling to clear up after themselves, and frequently leave large bins out of place. Occasionally collections are not made at all, and we have even see trucks make a tour of our block but not stop to collect.

Our most significant complaint however is about the state of the road and pavements in Edge Hill. We have often invited the councillors of the area to see for themselves and they have agreed that the general state of the road is disgusting. Particularly outside Wimbledon College, the gutters and pavements are ALWAYS strewn with litter, much of it very old, which is a sign of how little the streets are tended.

There is leaf mould on the pavements, which I estimate to be accumulated over at least five years. The gutters in Edge Hill and alongside Darlaston Road are always clogged with mulch, and often the drains and galleys block, causing flooding during torrential rains.

We share the task between us on the street of going out with sacks and equipment to collect rubbish, but it is disheartening to do this when we know that no official cleaning will be done. We have often indicated to the council the best times to send a street cleaning lorry to the area, when many fewer cars are parked, such as school holidays and early mornings, but this advice and request is ignored.

I would invite any member of the panel at any time to accompany me on a tour of the streets here, and I'm sure they would agree with me that we are not receiving anything like value for money within the large council tax bills that we pay.

I trust that this meeting will at last prompt some real and effective work to be done to keep our streets clean, safe and well-maintained: they certainly are not at the moment.

Tony Dines
Director, Board of Directors, Edge Hill Court Ltd

Clarion Housing
Jane Bolton – Head of Housing Services

Dear Rosie,
Thank you for the invitation to contribute to the discussion on the waste, re cycling and street cleaning contract.

The change to the provision of additional bins and alternate weekly collections of refuse and re- cycling has had an impact on our estates both visually and from a public health perspective. Our caretaking and cleaning staff on some estates continue to spend much of their time trying to keep these areas tidy and hygienic. There are different issues affecting different estates but providing new storage areas for the bins remains a challenge and a quite significant cost to Clarion.

We have been working with both Veolia and colleagues from LB Merton to address the issues, but on mixed estates (flats and houses) a return to weekly collections would be very much welcomed, although we understand that there may not be provision for this in the current contract.

We are very pleased that action has been taken to alleviate the problems on the Eastfields estate pending a full review involving all parties including the Residents Association.

We are also working with LBM and Veolia to help educate and inform residents of the need to properly re cycle as contaminated bins will often not be emptied causing knock on implications for the on site staff and residents. For example , a joint event to promote re cycling is planned on the Watermeads estate in early September .

I hope this information is helpful and we look forward to addressing any outstanding issues in the spirit of partnership.

Kind regards ,
Jane Bolton

Jane Bolton – Head of Housing Services
Clarion Housing
The Grange, 1 Central Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5PQ
T: 020 3784 5385 M: 07977 283 421
Email: jane.bolton@clarionhg.com
www.clarionhg.com
Follow us on Twitter @Clarionsupport
Clarion Housing is part of Clarion Housing Group