

# C-charge delay angers residents

LOCAL residents' groups are up in arms over the news that London Mayor Boris Johnson will not scrap the C-charge extension until late 2010.

Official figures show the extension collects between £55million and £70million each year. Although it is a lucrative cash cow for TfL it has had no effect on reducing congestion in the borough.

Before the extension was added – in February 2007 – a TfL study showed the borough had the most congested roads in London.

The figures reveal mo-

torists have spent a mind-numbing 7.6million hours stuck in jams, compared to 6.9million hours in Kensington & Chelsea.

More than two years later, H&F still has the most congested roads in the capital.

Gordon Taylor, chairman of the West London Residents' Association, adds: "TfL are dragging their feet on this as they can see the revenue streaming in – straight out of west Londoners' pockets."

"TfL is huge leviathan of an organisation with plenty of fat to cut. It simply is not

fair that west Londoners are subsidising TfL and allowing it to remain so big."

Now, H&F Council is backing residents' calls for the extension to be dismantled as soon as possible.

Cllr Nicholas Botterill, H&F Council deputy leader, said: "The council welcomes the assurances from TfL that the extension will definitely be scrapped."

"We had the most congested roads in the capital before the extension. And we still have the most congested roads."

"Residents who cannot afford the £8 daily charge have been cut off from each other – and in the worst cases from vital services."

Mayor Johnson sought to reassure residents saying: "We will be removing the western extension next year."

But David Tarsh, leading campaign against the extension and West London resident, says: "The abolition of the zone has massive public support and that's because people have common sense – they can see it's wrong and TfL should not delay." **RM**

# Tube station lift could be ditched

- ▶ Bid to bring in step-free access at Shepherd's Bush under cost-cutting threat
- ▶ Disabled groups hit out at Transport for London

**ROB MANSFIELD**

**FEARS** are growing that Transport for London (TfL) will shelve plans for a lift at Shepherd's Bush Central line station.

Disabled groups – backed by H&F Council – are challenging TfL after London Underground bosses admitted that their 'step-free' programme had been frozen in a bid to save cash.

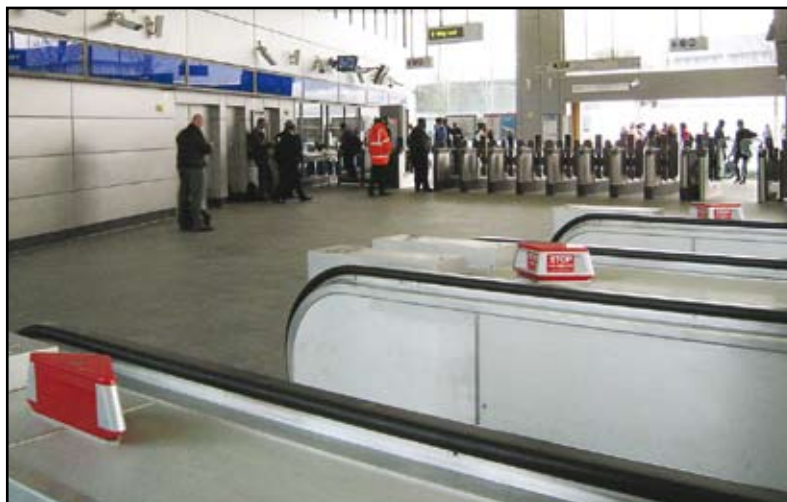
Kamran Mallick, director of Hammersmith & Fulham Action on Disability (Hafad), said: "Step-free access to the underground is essential if the tube network is to truly become a public service."

"Disabled people have the same rights as other commuters yet it is seen as acceptable to continue to allow barriers to this basic freedom. An accessible transport system is key in allowing individuals to play their part in society and enable them the opportunity, choice and independence that others take for granted."

TfL says that – due to buried water mains, sewers, gas pipes and electricity cables – constructing the lift shafts could cost up to £100million. It is understood that the lift itself will cost less than £1m.

H&F Council deputy leader Nicholas Botterill said: "No one actually believes that it costs £100m to dig a hole in the ground – even if there are some engineering challenges."

"People with mobility problems, including our disabled and elderly



**FEELING DOWN:** Shepherd's Bush tube station was rebuilt but no lifts provided

residents and mums with pushchairs, are demanding access to Shepherd's Bush Central line station and we will continue to lobby TfL hard on this."

The station opened in October 2008 to coincide with unveiling of the Westfield shopping centre next door. The old station was closed for eight months while it was given a sleek refurbishment. At the time, the council lobbied for practical measures – like the lifts – to be installed in the revamp but TfL failed to do so and instead committed to putting them in at a future date.

Cllr Botterill said: "TfL promised us that they would look into every possible way to put step-free access in Shepherd's Bush station at a reasonable cost. We are pressing them to look at this again and find a way of putting step-free access into this busy station."

In March 2008, TfL announced plans to get around the engineering problems by sinking the lift shaft and horizontal

passage down deeper, with a second lift taking people up to the platforms, instead of down. TfL said it was close to getting the project signed off by its board, but no decision was taken.

An estimated 70,000 passengers are travelling through Shepherd's Bush Central line station every week.

A TfL spokeswoman said: "Work to install lifts at Shepherd's Bush station on the Central line has been deferred indefinitely. The project was put on hold after costs escalated significantly, due to the complex engineering challenges of the site."

"Subsequent to that, additional costs from the absorption of Metronet and the economic downturn have forced the indefinite deferral of a number of step-free access projects including Shepherd's Bush."

H&F news understands that South Kensington is also a casualty of the freeze to TfL's step-free programme.

# Bright sparks planning night drama

FIREWORKS return to both Ravenscourt and Bishops parks in November as the borough gets ready for a night of Guy Fawkes magic.

This year, the displays take place on Friday, November 6 in Bishops Park, Fulham, and on Saturday,



November 7 at Ravenscourt Park in Hammersmith.

The gates open for both events at 6pm, with children's fireworks taking place at 7.15pm.

Both events will culminate with

fantastic firework displays at 8pm approximately.

Make sure you get to the parks early, as there will be no admittance after the displays start.

There will also be no admittance to any vendors, and it is prohibited to bring your own fireworks, sparklers, alcohol or dogs.

At both displays there will

be food and drinks stalls and a funfair, so make it a date and be prepared to be wowed.

You can guarantee your place by buying tickets, priced at £4, at the Lyric Theatre website by visiting: [www.lyric.co.uk](http://www.lyric.co.uk).

Tickets can also be purchased on the night at park gates for £6 (under fives go free). **Jon Weisgard**

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