

16 March 2009



Consultation - Regulations Review  
The Royal Parks  
The Old Police House  
Hyde Park  
London W2 2UH

Dear Sir or Madam,

### **Consultation on amending the Royal Parks regulations**

I am writing in response to your consultation on amending the Royal Parks regulations. My comments, as you will see, pertain to Richmond Park and in particular the proposed introduction of parking charges.

### **Introduction of Parking Charges in Bushy and Richmond Parks (Questions 1-5)**

I am opposed to the introduction of parking charges to Richmond Park.

Richmond Park - at least its eastern side, which is the part closest to Putney and Roehampton - is an isolated park very poorly served by public transport.

Along its entire eastern boundary there is only one entrance to the park (Roehampton Gate), located at the end of Priory Lane, a long road not served by public transport. The nearest bus stops are in Roehampton Lane or Danebury Avenue - neither of which are close to the Gate.

Along the Park's south-eastern side there are only two pedestrian entrances (Chohole Gate and Robin Hood Gate - with the latter closed to vehicles). These two gates are both off the A3 Roehampton Vale: a heavily congested dual carriageway into and out of London. While buses (the 85, 265 and K3) do travel along the A3, it is difficult for pedestrians to cross this highway safely.

The lack of public transport access to the park is critical to your proposal, since driving to the park is, for most Putney, Roehampton and Southfields residents the only way they can access it.

It is right that the Royal Parks Agency takes action to conserve Richmond Park, which as well as being a beautiful resource for the public to enjoy is London's largest Site of Special Scientific Interest, a national nature reserve and a European Special Area of Conservation. The threat to the park's wellbeing caused by rat-run commuters - rather than visitors to the Park - is a problem that you are right to monitor and seek to address.

But parking charges do not deter rat-running and because public transport in the area is so poor there is no suggestion that commuters drive to Richmond Park for free all-day parking while they get buses or trains into central London.

Continued/



### **Stuart King**

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I suggest that those who take advantage of free parking in Richmond Park are genuine visitors who wish to enjoy the park and have - by and large - no other means of getting to it. And Richmond Park is so large that the only means of getting around it unless you are a hiker or a cyclist is by car. I believe that a very substantial number of people will be deterred from visiting the park if these charges are introduced.

The Royal Parks Agency should be encouraging people to take advantage of the wonders of Richmond Park, not introducing a measure that will price some out of visiting it.

I recently surveyed Putney residents in an area sufficiently far from Roehampton Gate that they would be unable to walk to it. 14% supported the idea of charging for parking; 86% opposed it. This is a representative sample of local opinion and I call on you to listen to and respect it.

Instead of proceeding with these parking charges, I call on you to work with Transport for London to provide regular and reliable bus services that travel to and past the gates of the park; possibly even a route dedicated to ringing the park and connecting to all the gates. Unless and until you can offer visitors an alternative high quality means of reaching the Richmond Park, parking charges are unfair and punitive - and even then will be difficult to justify.

I would also urge you to renew your efforts to provide a new gate to Richmond Park from the Alton Estate to make it infinitely easier for Roehampton residents to use the park which is on their doorstep but which it is extremely difficult for them to reach. Local people have been campaigning on this issue since Tony Colman MP represented Putney and Roehampton, and it is time for action on this issue - action that may well reduce some car journeys to Richmond Park as well.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



**Stuart King**