

Express Letters

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A bee in your bonnet? Have your say here...

IF you want to express your opinion on anything that affects us as a community, then this is the place to do it. And bouquets are as worthwhile as brickbats are valuable. But please keep your letters short. We do reserve the right to cut letters to fit if necessary. If you contact *The Beeston Express* by email (see panel on page 2), remember to include your home address.

An eye to the future

DEAR EDITOR: You recently ran an article regarding the validity of our pitch for 'The Gourmet's Choice' baked potato stall near Sainsbury's supermarket in Beeston.

We are pleased to let you know that we have now completed our three-month trial period and, having complied with the terms and conditions of our original agreement, we are continuing to trade, and with a very pleasing growth rate of customers.

More importantly, we have to say a huge 'thank you' to the countless people who came to the stall to offer their support. More than 350 people came in one week, telling us to stay and even now, more than a month later, folk are still coming to us to ask: 'Everything still OK?'

With eyes still on the potato stall, the answer is a big: "Yes, it's crispy jackets all the way, 11.30 'til two. Tuesday to Saturday!"

Finally, sincere thanks to *The Beeston Express* for raising people's awareness of the situation, and my apologies to Central TV and BBC East Midlands, who both wanted to film us. However, we did not want adverse publicity for Sainsbury's and they were denied permission by me and my co-spud, Dawn Parol.

Steve Jones
Hallcroft, Beeston

PS: Anyone have suggestions for a dessert filling for a crispy jacket potato?!

Who says what goes?

DEAR EDITOR: Following your piece about 'Out of This World' (Front page, May 9), I rang the Planning Department to register my objection.

Unfortunately, I got the impression that there are no realistic grounds to turn down the planning application. Even though granting change of use would hasten the closure of a valued shop, it seems there is no reason in planning law to deny the owners the chance to use the premises as a restaurant.

In other words, the best way of protecting 'Out of This World' would be to persuade the owner not to proceed with the plans for adding these premises to Yod Siam.

At a tangent to that, I discussed with the Planning Officer the notices which have recently gone up in Sainsbury's car park. I recall there were notices that the car park was open to the public for Sainsbury's shoppers and people shopping in Beeston. Recently

(when?) they were changed to read "customer only car park".

I suppose it's ill-defined, (but) what is a customer? Can you go to the town centre before or after shopping in Sainsbury's? Anyway, it's a worrying development that Sainsbury's are claiming powers to enforce a restriction like this. I feel most users would be surprised to realise that they can't use this car park to visit Beeston unless they also use Sainsburys.

Nick Shelley
Sandy Lane, Bramcote

10p tax

DEAR EDITOR: I was concerned to see the letter from an anonymous 85-year-old reader who has understood from press comment that he (or she) will lose the equivalent of half the Winter Allowance through the abolition of the 10p tax band.

While I've criticised the effect of the change both in public and in private discussion with the Chancellor, this particular fear isn't actually justified, and it's important to clarify it in case anyone else over 65 is worried. The personal allowance for everyone over 65 has been raised so that any impact from the 10p abolition is entirely compensated. In most cases they will actually be slightly better off as a result, and in addition your reader will be getting a £100 increase in the Winter Allowance.

I hope this is reassuring for your reader. Anyone whose main income falls in the standard rate band should also be better off, as will anyone with children under 16 – this as part of the drive for child poverty reduction.

However, I do have constituents who are adversely affected, by an average of £2 a week, and I'm glad that compensation has been promised for them. I've agreed with the Chancellor to give him a set of typical examples of cases that need it. The main groups I'm thinking of are: (a) people without children on low income who aren't eligible for working tax credit, and (b) people who have retired early on small pensions. Both these groups should get compensation later this year.

If there are readers who are affected who don't fall into either category, I'd like to hear from them so I can try to make sure they are covered as well. You can contact me at 23 Barratt Lane, Attenborough, Nottingham NG9 6AD or by email at NickMP1@aol.com

Nick Palmer MP

Just trying to keep up!

DEAR EDITOR: In reply to H J Gale (Letters, May 9), whilst I am not convinced that the missing hand on the clock in Beeston precinct is a "disgrace to Beeston", I have to admit that the Beeston & District Civic Society does not have a view on it, and it may be that we should. We hope that he succeeds in getting the clock put right.

However, at the moment we are busy trying to get something done about the state of the so-called Tesco site on Station Road; making responses to various planning applications such as the proposal for a bingo hall at the old Tradex site on Queen's Road East; the proposed demise of the organic shop on Villa Street; proposals to demolish 74 Broadgate (a listed building); monitoring the old Long Eaton Fabrics site on Queen's Road West and the issue of studentification, etc.

We would welcome new members and activists like Mr Gale to our midst. Would he care to join us and campaign for other, equally important matters, in our area!

Joyce Brown
Chairman, Beeston & District Civic Society

Right to a reply

DEAR EDITOR: I think Anna Soubry should withdraw the calumny that the Labour Party has been sending fictitious letters from fictitious people. The ploy sounds rather desperate.

Incidentally, I did receive a questionnaire from Anna. I replied, requesting information on the Conservative Party position on various items involving Broxtowe.

No answer was the firm reply – and I did give my address.

Cllr Frank Prince
Beeston

Sgt C J Clarke

DEAR EDITOR: I am writing to ask if any of your readers can help trace the relatives of Sgt C J Clarke, an airman from Beeston who died on active service.

During the evening of April 30, 1941, a Wellington Bomber from a training unit at Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire collided with the cable of a barrage balloon tethered over Bristol. The pilot managed to crash the plane in our local park to avoid houses and civilian casualties.

Sadly, Sgt C J Clarke, one of the crew, did not survive. Local people are planning to erect a

memorial to the three airmen killed and would like to invite relatives. We only know Sgt Clarke came from Beeston.

If anyone can help us, please email me on *cemlyn@bluey ounder.co.uk or write to David Cemlyn, 22 Effingham Road, Bristol, BS6 5BJ.

David Cemlyn
Bristol

Kings and Queens

DEAR EDITOR: I was a young child at the time of Elizabeth Windsor's coronation and, having been bribed with a tin of biscuits and a purple book saying how wonderful the monarchy was, I thought it was quite a good thing.

Things could only get better, so I asked my parents when they would be King and Queen. Sadly, I was disappointed with the answer and that is probably the first time I saw the injustice of the monarchy.

Later, I wanted to join the Brownies; after an induction period, it was time to actually 'join' and become a 'proper' Brownie. Unfortunately, this involved swearing the Oath, something I was not prepared to do. The result was that I was not able to participate further in any Brownie activities. I was effectively barred from becoming a Brownie for refusing to take the Oath. Had that been today, I believe it would be possible to challenge it under discrimination legislation. And where else in the civilised world are children and young people below the age of majority required to make such a commitment, and what would be done to the child if they were not loyal?

I later wanted to become a police officer: after the initial selection process I was accepted for shortlisting. However, I would have to take the Oath if I was successful at the next stage. This caused me great concern, as I could not take the Oath knowing I did not agree with it. I wrestled with my conscience, trying to think of ways to make 'allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her Heirs and Successors' mean 'loyalty to the United Kingdom' or something similar, but without success.

For this to be realistic and to maintain my integrity it would be essential to either have a different form of words or agreement for my meaning with the powers-that-be, but that was not forthcoming so I withdrew my application and made my career elsewhere.

Nicola Lewis
Blandford Avenue, Chilwell