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<https://www.dublininquirer.com/2017/10/17/in-pockets-across-the-city-residents-ask-the-council-to-block-off-laneways/>

# In Pockets Across the City, Residents Ask the Council to Block off Laneways

LAOISE NEYLON OCTOBER 17, 2017

Stoneybatter

That street was completely transformed when Dublin City Council fenced off the grounds of the O'Devaney Gardens social-housing complex, which was being emptied out and torn down, in preparation for new construction on the site.

There had been problems with illegal dumping and with cars being burnt out, But then the fences went up and Ross Street, Arklow Street, and Ashford Street were no longer thoroughfares, but a sort of multi-street cul-de-sac.

"Instantly the three streets became much nicer, much tidier and much less anti-social behaviour,"

## Clontarf Laneway Closure

It is not just around Rathmines and the O'Devaney Gardens area that residents are working to close off laneways permanently.

In September, some residents of Clontarf got a right-of-way extinguished on a laneway that runs from Vernon Avenue along St Joseph's Square and out to Belgrove Road.

They cited anti-social behaviour and crime on the lane in their application to the council. "The reason for requesting the closure is to prevent break-ins to properties accessed via the laneway, to prevent anti-social behaviour, dumping and graffiti in the laneways," it said.

Council Area Manager Dave Dinnigan didn't want to close that lane, saying it would "reduce permeability" in the area. In other words, it would close off an access route for other people.

In support of this, a presentation shown to local councillors, outlined the increased distance some people would have to walk.

But all six local councillors backed the application. "There is plenty of permeability down there anyway," said Fine Gael Councillor Naoise Ó Muirí. "There are other ways around."

Backed by all the local councillors, the application received the support of the North Central Area Committee. The full council then approved it in September, says Ó Muirí.

Conclusion from this article

To apply to extinguish a public right of way, the majority of local property owners should be in agreement, says Siobhan Maher, public-realm strategy project manager for the council.

It is a big decision because it means that the property owners become responsible for upkeep, maintenance and insurance, she said.

“I’m not sure that they always understand the responsibility they are taking on,” she says .  
“Anything that happens in that lane is theirs from then on.”

For example, if illegal dumping continues, the council is no longer responsible for collecting the rubbish, she says.

Also, closing off laneways can make it harder for area residents to walk from one place to another, so they might start driving more, says Cuffe, the Green Party councillor.

If, despite these issues, residents decide to move ahead with their application to close off the laneway, other residents can still object, and this must be considered by councillors.

There’s no cost for applying to extinguish a right of way, but if the application is approved, the applicants have to pay all the costs involved in closing off the lane.

And it will always cost them a bit. In most cases, they need gates, which they have to pay to put in, and to maintain.

According to a response from Area Manager Dave Dinnigan, to Clontarf residents, they had to pay €5,500 just to remove the street lighting from the lane.

Back in June, independent Councillor Mannix Flynn requested that the right of way be extinguished for Cuffe Lane near St Stephen’s Green. Again, the argument was that there was too much anti-social behaviour.

In its reply to Flynn, council management said that “A fee of €2,000 is payable to cover Dublin City Council’s expenses in executing the extinguishment of a public right of way process.”

So far, no application has been received from residents in relation to Cuffe Lane, according to information from a council spokesperson.