

Better Streets for Tower Hamlets transforms a parking space into a parklet!



Campaigners from Better Streets for Tower Hamlets set up a 'parklet' in Bethnal Green Road. Picture: Better Streets for Tower Hamlets

We, Better Streets for Tower Hamlets turned the spot in Bethnal Green Road into a mini-park on Sunday 19 May in a bid to draw people's attention to the need for healthier public spaces.

It's great to see people enjoying public space in a creative way. Behind this fun event is a serious message. In the face of the pollution and congestion affecting all Londoners, it's time to rethink how we use our streets. We need to create space for young people, the elderly, and all residents to walk, cycle, rest, play and enjoy the street. The single space was transformed with seating, plants and parking spaces for bikes turning the bay into what the campaigners dubbed a 'parklet'.

Households in the borough without cars outnumber those which have them by two to one, according to Better Streets for Tower Hamlets. It wants to see traffic levels drop in every ward. But in spite of people outnumbering cars, a huge amount of space is devoted to vehicles. Surely we can use some of this space for different purposes? Why not allow people to use the space? Parklets can be made into lovely places to look at such as a mini-garden, and add a lot to the sense of community on a street.

London Living Streets, which supports Better Streets for Tower Hamlets, wants every street in the capital to have a 'parklet' with one set up every 50 metres.

With this parklet we opened a conversation about public space and how repurposing something as banal as a kerbside can benefit communities.

For more about us visit betterstreetsfortowerhamlets.wordpress.com/ or follow @BetterStreetsTH on Twitter.