



School Travel Plan Newsletter November 2024

Welcome to our first School Travel Plan Newsletter. The School Travel Plan is a wider strategic plan that is developed with local partners including Buckinghamshire County Council, Hughenden Parish Council, local residents and the school community. It has been a long time since the school has reviewed the existing plan, and it is clear that a lot has changed since the plan was originally developed in 2020.

The focus of the plan is to look at ways we can make travel to school safer and more sustainable, as well as reduce traffic congestion. To be able to achieve any of the objectives we have outlined in the plan, we are going to need support, co-operation and consideration from the school and the wider community.

We understand that travel to school is difficult and at present, is being compounded by the large number of road closures or temporary traffic lights that are appearing in the immediate vicinity of the school. We also recognise that the geography of the local area does make walking to school challenging; this does not mean however, that we can not try to work together to improve things for everyone.

Currently, we have a small travel and road safety group, and we would welcome any member of the school or local community who would like to join us. During the remainder of this newsletter, I am going to explain some of the projects that we intend to explore, and simple ways that you may be able to help. I will also detail some of the actions we have already implemented.

I am certain that achieving the objective of safer travel to school is something that every parent will want to support.

Thank you.

Mrs Suzanne Best

What are the challenges?

The challenges we face are focused around these key areas:

- Parking
- Road congestion
- Distance travelled by parents
- Road safety infrastructure around the school
- The speed limit of the road outside of the school
- Lack of safe walking routes

Below, I have outlined a brief summary of each of these challenges. Whilst these are not our only issues, we believe that these are the key areas we need to focus on at this time.

Parking

It is well known that there is limited parking in the immediate vicinity of the school, and this has been exacerbated by the closure of the White Lion pub and the restriction placed on the use of the car park.

What are the key issues:

Lack of safe places to park

The majority of parents and pupils travel to school in single family occupancy vehicles, which increase the volume of cars on the road.

Parents not parking with consideration of others

In recent weeks, it has become clear that not all parents park with consideration or safety in mind. I have received reports of parents parking on or blocking residents' driveways, double

parking and blocking the road, parking in private parking spaces, and parking too close to the road junctions. All of these incidents are sadly not isolated and have all been reported this term. I would like to make it clear to all parents: at no point should you park on or block any residential driveway - this is private land and should not be used. When this happens, it is understandably distressful for the homeowners, and can cause major inconvenience to them. A number of our immediate neighbours are elderly, and they can find it very upsetting and disrespectful.

Double parking

Double parking can cause a back up in the traffic and often bring the roads around the school to a standstill, meaning that coaches, other road users or parents can not get through. This increases frustration and has caused incidents of road rage.

Parking on grass verges and blocking the pathways to school

By parking on the grass verges (such as those outside the pub, for example), obstructions are created on the pathway leading to school. This means that parents who are walking from Great Kingshill - some of whom are using buggies or wheelchairs - are often needing to go into the road to get to school, or having to wait until the obstruction has cleared. The speed of the road and the volume of traffic using Cryers Hill Road makes this exceptionally dangerous for pedestrians.

Parking on private land

The school has a longstanding and positive relationship with many of the local businesses - in particular with Dolly and Dev, who own the shop next to school - and they have always recognised the challenges parents face, and been supportive of parents using the car park outside the shop. This privilege however, is reserved only for parents who are intending to purchase something from the shop. It is not a free car park, nor is it a waiting area. Some parents are regularly parking there a lot longer than required for pick up and drop off, and this is restricting the use of the car park for other customers. Parents are also blocking the entrance to the car park, meaning that other users can not safely get in or out. When this happens, the pathway to school (once again) becomes blocked.

Parking too close to the junctions

There are repeated incidents of parents parking on the junction of Four Ashes Road and Cryers Hill Road; this is both dangerous and illegal. It is restricting visibility for other drivers and pedestrians trying to cross the road, and is highly likely to cause an accident.

Road Congestion

Increased car use

We understand that many of our parents are working parents, and therefore the school run is often a time sensitive process. This has resulted in an increase in the number of parents using their cars to take their children to school, as it is perceived that there just isn't sufficient time to walk.

Regular and often unpredictable road works

In recent months, there has been a significant increase in the number of road works taking place on many of the roads surrounding the school, and this has diverted the traffic through the few routes that are open at the time.

Distance travelled by pupils and parents

One of the greatest strengths of our school is the rich diverse community that we serve. It is safe to say that in recent years, our pupils are travelling to school from a wider geographical area, which creates the amazing community our school is. This has become an important part of our pupil recruitment - not only for the community benefits, but also due to the harsh reality that pupil numbers in the Wycombe North area are low, and the number pupils who live within the school's identified catchment area is rapidly reducing. Without pupils, the school can not survive. The downside of this is obviously the increasing number of families needing to use their cars to travel to school. We recognise this, but frustratingly, the infrastructure around the school was not designed to support so many car users.

Road safety infrastructure around the school

Pelican Crossing

We are very fortunate to have the crossing at the top of Cryers Hill Road. Sadly, the number of parents using the crossing is reducing, with parents often choosing to take their lives in their hands and cross the road away from the crossing, as it is more convenient. We recognise that to use the crossing once parked on Four Ashes Road, you have to cross both Four Ashes Road and Cryers Hill Lane, however, it is still safer to cross these roads than walk out on to Cryers Hill Road, where road users are not expecting you. The speed of the road outside school is fast; often drivers travelling from the Great Kingshill area are fully aware that the speed limit increases to 50mph just after the school, and they are already accelerating as they pass the school as a result. Similarly, road users coming up the hill have already been driving at 50mph, and have not yet reduced their speed as they enter the 30mph zone outside the school. It is a fact that a pedestrian hit at 30mph has a very significant (one in five) chance of being killed. This rises significantly to a one in three chance if they are hit at 35mph. Even small increases in speed can

lead to an increase in impact severity. The risk of injury increases exponentially with impact speed.

Whilst it was a number of years ago that the school community sadly lost a pupil due to a road traffic incident, and I do understand that I can not insist that parents use the crossing, the staff and I implore everyone to use the crossing and think before they step out on to Cryers Hill Road - for their own safety, as well as the safety of their young children.

Lack of safe walking routes

At present, each of the clearest identified walking routes has limitations due to the condition of the pathways.

Pathway from Great Kingshill

Whilst the pathway from Great Kingshill village is a flat route, the path is often narrow in places, and this is compounded by the overgrown hedges that further restrict the pathway. We understand that this can make it difficult to walk with young children or buggies as you are then forced into the road.

Pathway up Cryers Hill Road

We recognise that walking up Cryers Hill Road is a challenging walk, as the hill is very steep. We have also identified that the pathway is severely damaged in places, making it unsafe to use as it creates a trip hazard. In the same way as the pathway from Great Kingshill is impeded by the overgrown hedges, the same can be said for Cryers Hill Road. Also at this time of the year, the fallen leaves create a further slip and trip hazard.

Pathway along Cryers Hill Lane

This route is possibly the safest route, with the pathway in a relatively good condition. This is supported by grass verges in some places, creating an increased distance from the traffic. The perceived challenge with this route is that it is too far, however, I am aware that many parents park a long way down Four Ashes Road, close to the Garden of Rest, and the distance from there is the same as if you were to walk from the end of Cryers Hill Lane up to school.

Thank you

If you are still reading this newsletter, thank you! I recognise that what has been covered so far doesn't paint a positive picture, nor does it tell you anything you don't already know. I do feel that it is important to outline the reality of the challenges we face and the impact that we, as a school community, are having on our neighbours.

As you read on, I have outlined the objectives that we have set for the travel plan, and detailed some of the actions we have already taken. I will also introduce some of the initiatives I would like the whole school community to support.

What are our objectives?

Short Term

To promote safe and considerate parking in the immediate area of the school

Medium Term

To increase the percentage of pupils walking to school

To create safe walking routes to school from Great Kingshill, Widmer End and Hughenden Valley

To re-establish walking crocodiles from Great Kingshill, Widmer End and Hughenden Valley

To promote road safety and explore wider road safety measures

Long Term

To obtain a reduction in the speed limit on Cryers Hill Road from the crossing to the bottom of the hill

To explore possibilities of local land that could be used to create a safe park and walk area for parents

To develop the front area of the school to create a drop zone and re-establish the in and out driveway

To review parking restrictions around the residential areas of the school

I'm sure you can see that to achieve any of these objectives, we are going to need support; not only from our school community, but the wider local community, and therefore it is important that we all commit to working together to create as safe an area as possible around the school.

Short Term Objectives

To promote safe and considerate parking in the immediate area of the school

We want to ensure that the journey to school is as pleasant as it can be for everyone; this includes our local residents and business owners.

Actions already taken

I have been working with local residents to identify parents who are not parking with consideration and parking across or on private driveways. Where I have been able to identify the individuals, these parents have been written to and requested not to park there in future.

I have been monitoring the parking outside school during both pick up and drop off in an attempt to find potential solutions. I have also spoken with local residents and business owners to reassure them that as a school leadership team, we are doing everything we can to support them.

Actions required by all parents

I would like to be very clear with all parents: when parking your car, please ensure you do so with consideration and respect for other road users. I am asking that all families commit to the following:

Safe and Considerate Parking Promise

As a family we promise to:

- Park legally and not create an obstruction to other road or path users
- Park in a way that does not block residents driveways
- Allow the appropriate amount of time during my daily routine to park safely and get my child to school on time
- Think before I park. Is it safe to park here? Is it legal? What impact does parking here have on others?

Next Steps

- Contact the brewery to request that they support us in the short term to create increased parking
- Work with Hughenden Parish Council to consider potential 'park and walk' locations
- Continue to monitor the parking outside school
- Work with pupils to raise awareness of the impact of unsafe parking practices

Medium Term Objectives

- To increase the percentage of pupils walking to school

- To create safe walking routes to school from Great Kingshill, Widmer End and Hughenden Valley
- To re-establish walking routes from Great Kingshill, Widmer End and Hughenden Valley
- To promote road safety and explore wider road safety measures

We want to support and actively encourage parents and pupils to park and walk to school. There are so many positive benefits to walking for pupils, and it would hopefully help to address some of the congestion in the immediate area around the school.

Actions already taken

I held a meeting with Stan Jones (Chair of Hughenden Parish Council), Dave Carroll (Buckinghamshire Councillor) and James Tunnard (Local Area Technician for Buckinghamshire Highways) to look at any potential hard and soft measures we could put in place to support our travel plan.

A discussion with Hughenden Parish Council and Buckinghamshire County Council took place, focusing on clearing and repairing the pathways on the identified safe walking routes.

Chris Winder and a small group of parents have spent two weekends clearing the paths and cutting back the hedges around the school.

Action required by all parents

We ask parents to consider parking a little further away from school and walking, as well as encouraging pupils in years 5 & 6 to walk to and from an allocated meeting point, a little further away from school.

Next Steps

- Suzanne Best and members of the travel safety group to attend the local Great Kingshill Residents Association meeting on 9th December
- Travel Planning Group to complete Modeshift Star Travel Planning Document
- Liaison with Hughenden Parish Council and Buckinghamshire County Council to support identification of park and walk sites

Long Term

- To obtain a reduction in the speed limit on Cryers Hill Road from the crossing to the bottom of the hill

- To explore possibilities of local land that could be used to create a safe park and walk area for parents
- To develop the front area of the school to create a drop zone and re-establish the in and out driveway
- To review parking restrictions around the residential areas of the school

We wish to work with and support the local residents in petitioning to get the speed limit reduced on Cryers Hill Road from 50pmh to 40mph, and believe that this may also be an opportune moment to request a change in the speed limit during school times outside the front of school from 30mph to 20mph.

We also wish to undertake a feasibility study of redeveloping the front of the school to create a drop zone, and therefore re-establish the grass verges outside the front of the school to be no parking zones.

Actions already taken

- I have spoken with Brian McCollom, a local resident and representative from Hughenden Valley Residents Association, and he has shared his plan to petition to have the speed limit on the hill reduced to 40mph, which as a school we are supportive of. I have agreed to continue to liaise with Brian as the project develops.
- Conversation with highways about the possibility of re-establishing the grass verges and exploring an in and out driveway. We also looked at what potential hard measures or parking restrictions could be put in place around the school.

Actions required by all parents

- Please sign the petition

[ePetition - Reduction of Speed Limit Cryers Hill Road and Valley Road - Modern Council](#)

Next Steps

- Conduct a feasibility study and costed plan for the development of the front of the school
- Continue to work with Hughenden Parish Council, Great Kingshill Residents Association, Buckinghamshire Highways and councillors to develop a robust plan and look at sources for funding
- Fully complete the Modeshift Star document to submit the travel plan for accreditation

What can you do next?

Firstly, thank you for reading to the end. I hope you can see from the plans outlined above that we are working really hard to try and make the area around the school safer for everyone.

If you would like to get involved or think that you might have skills that may be able to help us move some of the objectives forward, please get in contact with me via the school office or Class Dojo.

If you don't have the time to get involved or help, please be mindful of your own actions and try to follow what has been outlined in the newsletter. If everyone makes little changes, we can make a big difference and start to bring about change.

And finally, please respond to the petition and any other information gathering questionnaires that come out in relation to school travel - the more responses we get and the more information we have, the stronger our plan will be. Please support any trial initiatives we put in place, or just think about the small changes you can make.