

Travel Safety Meeting Minutes

26/04/2018

The Studio, Cults Primary

Attendees:

Rachel Soplantila Chair, Julie Baghurst minutes, Kate Shaw, Lynda Smart, Stan Bain, Alison Stewart, Sonya Angus, Phillipa Smith, Freia Henery, Paula Swinburn, Rebecca Cox, Caroline Johnstone Head Teacher, Michelle Murray, Jane Setter, Kate Strachan, Katrina Stewart, Jen Gilmore, Lesley Bentley, Lisa Aitkin, Katie Hulme, Iris Van Egdome, Scott McCall Senior City Warden, Shane Boyle City Warden, Graeme McKenzie Technical Officer, Traffic Management ACC, Mike Mitchel ACC, Cllr Philip Bell Kirsten Robertson from the Press and Journal Newspaper.

Context:

Concerns regarding the large volume of traffic including illegal and dangerous parking were raised in 2014. The traffic and parking problems around the Primary school were been successfully addressed through a number of initiatives culminating in the school being nominated for environmental awards in 2016. It was found that a united approach with parents, staff, pupils, City Wardens, Aberdeen City Council Officers, Councillors and the full School community worked really well to create a tangible improvement to safety.

Unfortunately the problem of unsafe parking is increasing again around the primary school and there is real concern about children's safety as a result.

April 2018 Traffic/parking Survey results

To date 54 out of 463 surveys produced have been returned, however there is doubt regarding the distribution of the surveys as not all parents have received one. It was suggested that an electronic survey tool e.g. Survey Monkey would get a greater number of responses.

The results of the surveys received have been collated (see attached)

City Wardens

Scott McCall (Senior City Warden) spoke regarding the parking issues around the school. He emphasised that the wardens' powers are limited by legal requirements; parking in the bus bay, however, can earn an instant ticket.

There was a discussion regarding parking on the corner of Earlsells Road at the end of the woodland lane near the school where there are double yellow and single yellow lines. Concern was expressed that this area is frequently used as a parking space. Very many families use the woods to walk to school and exit at this point making a reversing or parking car very hazardous.

Action: The installation of bollards or similar measures is to be investigated by Graeme McKenzie to prevent parking here while still retaining access to the skate park and the woods.

In the past wardens have been verbally abused for carrying out their duties and it was emphasised that wardens can only act on violations that they actually see. Parents are encouraged, however, to speak to wardens on duty if they see illegal parking or traffic violations.

Wardens agreed to come into the school to speak to the children about the importance of parking safely and using the drop off zones correctly etc.

Action: Scott McCall to liaise with Mrs Johnstone regarding dates and times.

ACC - Right turn only from perimeter road proposal.

The enforcement of right turn only from the school perimeter road exit during peak hours (i.e. at school drop off and pick up times) will be initiated very soon. The aim is to relieve traffic pressure at peak times.

The effectiveness of the proposal was discussed with reservations about how effective it would be and if it would cause a bottleneck on Earlswells Road. Any enforcement of the new regulation would be carried out by the police.

It was proposed that the scheme is tried and its success monitored – it is hoped that this will be in place by the early Summer.

Action: Rachel Soplantila to speak to Sergeant Simon Lewis-Dalby who is the community police link.

Crossing Patrol

In recent months the location of the School Crossing Patrol Officer (i.e. the lollipop lady) has changed – she no longer assists with crossing the perimeter road. The reason for this was discussed and questioned. It was explained that the Crossing Patroller is currently in the position that she should have always been in.

It was suggested however, that possibly the position of the crossing patroller was decided before the new crossing at Hillview Crescent was installed meaning that a lot of children now approach the school from that direction. There are also lots of pupils who come to school along the lane beside the skate park in the woods. These pupils no longer receive help to cross the perimeter road and there is a lot of concern that this is dangerous.

The position of the School Crossing Patrol Officer is determined after a traffic and safety survey is carried out by Aberdeen City Council.

Action: Mike Mitchel is to arrange another survey to be carried out to decide whether the location of the Crossing Officer should be changed – this will be carried out in the next couple of weeks.

It was also emphasised that there is a huge shortage of School Crossing Patrol Officers across Aberdeen and Cults Primary is fortunate to have one in position.

Illegal and Unsafe Parking – Deterrents

- Name and Shame – a system for naming and shaming repeat parking has been proposed previously but Mrs Johnstone feels this would be unwise for a number of reasons. Publicly naming/shaming people can have wider repercussions for both parents and pupils as well as causing a great deal of ill feeling. There is also the issue of who is carrying out the observations of any parking violations.

- City Wardens being present more often – as always this is a question of resources as there are only some many Wardens for all Aberdeen schools. However, City Wardens are present at the school at least once a week with the day and times being varied - five parking tickets have been issued at city schools in the last few days.
- Persistent offenders can be reported to the City Wardens by parents via e-mail (citywardens@aberdeencity.gov.uk) although wardens have to see a violation in order to act.
- Parents overseeing unsafe/illegal parking – this was advised against by the Senior City Warden due to potential repercussions or ill feeling.

Proposed Solutions

- Parking at Hillview Church – there is ample parking in the car park at Hillview Church next to the school. There has been a reluctance to use this car park however. One of the reasons could be due a lack of pavement from the car park to the school. At present the access road can be busy and although the path in the woods is very user friendly, it's not easily accessed from the car park for those with pushchairs, wheel chairs or buggies. It is proposed that this access is improved – there are a number of grants available that may be able to help with this.
Action: Rachel to liaise with the woodland group and Iain Mearns the Pc Chair to see if a joint bid could be submitted.
- Preventing parking on verges – a number of tree trunks are preventing people from parking on verges but some people still persist in doing this. More tree trunks placed on verges, to stop parking there, is proposed.
- The increased double yellow lines and the new red unit drop off zone have both improved parking around the perimeter road.
- Walking Bus – **Action: Alison Stewart is to investigate the viability and interest in a walking bus scheme/s.**
There are grants available to help create and run walking bus schemes so these could be a potential source of funding. There are several issues to be addressed; for example, insurance, liability, organisation and the need for more road crossings.
- Councillor Philip Bell outlined the need for a change in the mindset of those who flaunt the parking rules and the importance of distributing information about the parking and traffic problems. He supported the role of the wardens in speaking to pupils and how peer pressure can be an important tool in getting parents/carers to park and drive safely around the school.
- Changing the speed limit on the perimeter road was proposed but, unfortunately, this is not possible as it would require new legislation.
- Living Streets – this charity promotes the benefits of walking and supports initiatives such as Walk to School campaign. Pupils can state and log how they get to school (ie walk/drive/cycle) and there are rewards, either individual or as a group, for those who walk. However, it is recognised that some carers have to drive to school and questions whether there would be fundraising required to support the charity.
Action Mrs Johnstone is to enquire further and to investigate incentive schemes to encourage walking to school.
- School involvement with telephone calls from the school to individuals who have parked illegally or in an unsafe way was discussed. There are several issues around this – who would identify the 'bad' parkers? Staff have no time to do this and there is the potential for abuse

from those being called. Long term, changing the culture and attitude of the school community was deemed to be more effective.

- Parents Evenings – Information is to be distributed at parents evenings and volunteer parents will chat to others about the traffic problem, the benefits of walking to school, explaining how the drop off zones work etc. Information will also be given to new parents and at P1 induction evenings etc. Education and information is seen to be key in tackling the problem and it was thought that September was a logical time to really start this (for example a new parent pack can be created and a new Walk to School initiative started) Pupils will very much be involved in this.
- Volunteers for parents evenings: Lynda Smart, Kate Shaw, Freia Henery, Stan Bain, Alison Stewart, Rebecca Cox, Phillippa Smith, Sonya Angus. Any more volunteers would be very much welcomed and everyone attending the meeting was gratefully thanked for their input and support.