

## **Meeting on Traffic and Parking, Maidwell Primary School Thursday 15 June**

### **Present:**

Chair: Keith Millard (Highways Safety Officer, Northamptonshire Highways), Geoff Woods (Maidwell Primary School), PC Hutchings, (Northamptonshire Police, Brixworth) Sarah Paybody (Parish Council), Penny Munro (Parish Council), Paul Gooding (parent & Chair of Governors), Mark Pickford (parent), Martin Hedges (parent), Laura Glazebrook (parent), Eileen Arnold (resident), David Unwin (resident), Polly Unwin (resident), Judy Turland (resident), Diane Stanton (resident), Carole Walker (resident & parent), Terry Mortimer (resident & parent), Pete Redman (resident).

**Apologies** – Rosemarie James (Head Teacher), Rob Willoughby (parent), Ben Smith (parent).

Concerns about parking/issues relating to school traffic had been raised with the Parish Council. This mediation meeting was arranged to allow all parties to share their issues and identify possible solutions.

Keith Millard reported that no recordable accidents had occurred on Draughton Road in relation to school traffic. The issue was similar to that faced by many villages across the county and there were no easy and simple solutions. Success of the School meant that there was more traffic at key times than the lane had been designed for.

It was also recognised that the School has no jurisdiction over the public highway. Mr Woods confirmed that the School took the matter extremely seriously and had been communicating on a regular basis with parents. PC Hutchings confirmed he had been working with the school for over two years on this issue. Ideas such as “naming and shaming” drivers had been discussed but not implemented as it was felt it would cause more issues.

PC Hutchings had raised concerns about large farm machinery moving around the village at school drop-off/pick up times. Farmers recognised the particular challenges of these times and had agreed to try and avoid travelling through the village at these specific times as far as possible. He noted that villagers could help by adopting the same approach and trying to avoid these peak times.

As the school was now operating at maximum capacity and was likely to do so for the foreseeable future, the number of cars travelling into the village were likely to stay around same; numbers would fluctuate dependent on families with more than one child at school. Residents wished it to be noted that they were highly supportive of the School and were delighted that it was so successful.

Key issues raised by residents;

- there is significant congestion at drop-off/pick up times and getting through the village at this time is very difficult
- cars are parked on residents' verges or across drive ways with little consideration. Some residents have had to place logs on verges to stop parking
- drivers are reluctant to give way and show poor consideration to other road users
- vehicle speeds
- significant concern about access for emergency vehicles at peak times
- children sometimes appear to be walking in road on their own and doors can be opened in front of on-coming vehicles.
- there is a one specific "pinch point" where road narrows – in front of Old Rectory up to Rectory Farmhouse, where parking causes particular problems. One household is unable to leave their house if cars are parked opposite their gate which has led to missed appointments.

Following extensive discussion, the meeting agreed that, whilst many do park considerately, there is an issue with parking around school drop-off and pick up times, that this caused frustration for both residents and parents and that there were examples of poor behaviour on both sides.

### **Possible solutions/next steps**

There are no easy solutions. A considerate approach and mutual respect for all roads users and residents was likely to have the biggest impact.

### **Actions to be progressed:**

- **Map;** a clear map showing where not to park and where to park will be produced and widely shared with parents via e:mail and paper. Copies will also be placed on school notice boards. PC Hutchings would support implementation by being around at drop-off/picking up times.
- **Local Authority No Parking Signs;** signs to be placed on Draughton Road at the key pinch point (Old Rectory through to Rectory Farmhouse).
- **Drop-off culture;** it was noted that there was much less of a problem on rainy days when children were dropped off and parents returned immediately to their cars. It was suggested that this could be built upon and parents discouraged to stand chatting in the playground. Keith Millard to discuss possible "drop-off zones" with school, who would also work to discourage presence of parents after 9am.

The playground conversation was important as it contributed to a community feel but that it could perhaps take place at The Stag's, if Rob Willoughby's offer of hospitality was continued.

- **Communication;** regular communication to parents was critical, particularly at the start of the school year. The school undertook to continue to communicate out to parents and reinforce the importance of considerate parking.

### **Other Possible Options:**

These are more difficult to action but will be reviewed again, in the light of the success of the above actions:

- **Cones;** these could be placed in particular pinch points on Draughton Road. Some schools had used this as a daily option (placing out before school and taking in after pick up time) but this required resource from the school, which would be difficult. It was noted that cones can only be placed legally on the road by the police and can only remain on the road for 7 days. It was also noted that permanent placement of cones would become ineffective over time – they were most effective if removed and replaced at appropriate periods.
- **Road Safety Champions;** Keith Millard to work with the School on possible road safety campaign and using pupils to challenge parents on safe/considerate parking.
- **Parking at The Stag/introduction of Walking Train;** use of the pub car park had been kindly offered by Rob Willoughby in the past. This would have allowed parents could drop their children off in the car park walk to school or make use of a walking train. However there had been no uptake for this. In addition, concerns had been raised about crossing the A508, given the amount and speed of traffic (even though 30 mph zone).

The introduction of the 30 mph zone meant that a pelican crossing was a potential option. However PC Hutchings noted that in order for this to be installed, a headcount would be undertaken and given very few people currently used this option, the installation would be very unlikely.

- **Policing of parking by school resource;** some had experience of schools policing parking daily with staff in high visibility jackets. This was dismissed as a practical option on health & safety and resources grounds. One school had terminated their trial after staff had been abused.
- **Car sharing/Staggered times;** very difficult to implement given parents travelling onto/from work etc.
- **Traffic Regulation Order;** Keith Millard noted that should the village find a more permanent solution for school parking, the County Council could assist by providing joint funding for a Traffic Regulation Order which would restrict parking in particular areas at particular times. This would cost between £3k-£10k.