



## **Tonbridge Grammar School**

### **Local Residents Meeting**

**Fri 7<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2018 19:30 – 20:30hrs**

### **Meeting Notes & Action Points**

**Attendees:** Mr & Mrs. Thatcher, Mr & Mrs Paulson, Mrs Kay Topliss, Mr Nick Hebditch, Ms. Deborah Wilcock, Mrs O'Shaughnessy, Mr Peter Ingrams, Mr Chris Payne, Mr Disbury.

**TGS:** Mr Chris Fitt, Deputy Head Teacher (**DHT**), Mr Adrian Pitts, Assistant Head Teacher (**AHT**) and Mr. Jeremy Kenyon, Facilities & Estates Manager (**FEM**).

**Apologies:** Cllr Heslop, Mrs Joyce, Mrs Nielsen, Mr Bill Seakins, Mr & Mrs Bragg, PCSO Mary Coe.

#### **Welcome and Introductions.**

**Travel Action Group Update.** The **AHT** gave an overview of the work of the Travel Action Group, which comprises representatives from our neighbouring roads, school staff, parents, governors, the local Police and Councillors that review progress and actions on the School Travel Plan. They meet three times a year.

Last meeting - A detailed look at the Annual Travel Review was the main focus of the meeting. 2016-18 Targets were discussed with increased numbers of students walking to school, and an increase in car sharing amongst staff being noted. Some progress had been made on the 6<sup>th</sup> form Parking Policy and the review of traffic management is on-going. A neighbour from Deakin Leas noted that it was 'less hassle each year'. The action plan and appropriate remedial strategies would be finalised at the next meeting.

Tonbridge Schools Travel Forum - supporting our students accessing public transport. Meet several times a year; Look at bus capacity with KCC representatives and local councillors. Hildenborough trail bus 200s being introduced in January 2019.

Following previous residents' meeting have introduced road safety assemblies and messages via form tutors ; constant reminders. Residents spoke of students being dropped in Vauxhall Gardens and crossing A21. Rise in parental cars partly due to congested and late running buses, or problems on the rail network.

## Lettings & Events Update

The FEM gave an overview of the larger events which had occurred in Terms 1 & 2. There had been 2 x Yr. 7 Open Mornings, 1 x Yr. 7 Open Evening and 1 x 6th Form Open Evening. These were busy events – the open mornings were attracting around 400, Open evenings approximately as much again.

Using past experience, the School utilised a traffic management plan of:

- Extra staff on key junctions & on the gates
- Extra signage at Baltic Rd/The Drive junction this year
- 3 x minibuses for shuttle service to Sainsbury's

Last year's worst congestion occurred at the end of the event when pupils who had been guiding during the evening were collected by their parents. The School committed to look at how this could be improved at the last meeting, and this year initiated a phased release of specific house groups every 15 mins. An area of the top car park was reserved for collections only, and parents were allowed to drive onto the School site and wait in the top car park to collect. Although not perfect this did seem to improve the log jam which did briefly occur last year as 100 odd cars were trying to arrive/depart at the same time.

This year we received only 1 complaint from all 4 of the open events, from a resident in Baltic Road, which was due to selfish parking. A Deakin Leas resident commented that a car had pulled into his driveway at one point to clear the road as nowhere else to go. Also would the School give consideration to avoiding Halloween if possible, as this did increase traffic on a night where young families were often out. The FEM responded that it is always a challenge to avoid dates where other local schools were hosting similar events, but that his comments would be fed back.

**Chess Competition.** Following feedback from residents, the School had worked with organisers to reduce attendance by limiting how many family members could accompany each participant. There was an acknowledgment from those present that this had had a positive impact on the event.

**Lettings:** Barracudas and National Citizen Service were hosted by the School over the summer break. The FEM explained that although Barracudas is a commercial letting and does generate critical income for the School, it is important to remember that it also provides childcare for local residents who still have to work.

There were no specific issues from Barracudas, but having a cross-over with NCS did create some issues. The NCS cohort comprised of older students, but disappointing levels of supervision and lack of outdoor space meant NCS did create some issues with pizza deliveries, football in the car park etc. which was unwelcome for the School and

residents. The FEM had subsequently met with NCS who acknowledged the issues. The School would insist on a review of how this could be better managed in future, but NCS funding has been reduced for next year's program, so at present no plans to host again.

Deborah Wilcock responded by stating that the gates were opening prior to 08:00hrs, which is the official start time for parents to drop off. The FEM explained that while this is the time that the Barracudas Reception opens to allow children to be dropped off, there is still a requirement for the Barracudas staff (approx. 12-15) to enter the site prior to this in order to get set up and be ready to register the arriving children. Once the gates were open, it becomes impossible to separate the staff cars from parent drop off's and coupled with the construction traffic this proved to be a real challenge.

The School had requested and paid additional costs to have a site foreman present throughout the construction programme – part of his remit being to manage traffic flow and deliveries. This was not managed as agreed, and the site foreman was subsequently removed from post after the first 3 weeks.

The School will review the experience from this year and take into consideration the feedback received.

### **Building Development / Planned Maintenance.**

The FEM advised residents at July meeting that there would be lots of construction work Over the summer break. There were some issues regarding contractor access as discussed in the previous agenda item, but overall works did progress as planned with only internal decoration necessitating weekend working.

There was one weekend in Sep where external fabricators worked both days over the weekend to complete installation of the external staircases, but they accessed from the rear of the School, not through the main gates.

### **External Site Lighting (including Pitch Lights)**

Mr & Mrs Thatcher (Vauxhall Gardens) expressed a concern that the lights from one of the columns in particular was very noticeable from their property, and that the level of lumens to immediately surrounding areas appeared higher than expected. The FEM replied that the full commissioning test had only recently been completed, which involved taking metered readings in over 120 specific locations on and around the field of play.

The final report had not yet been produced, but when it was complete it would be checked carefully against the lighting plan submitted as part of the Planning Application. The FEM assured those present that any variation from the plan would be addressed to ensure it absolutely complies with the original proposal. Mr Thatcher extended an invitation to the FEM to view the lights from their property if helpful. The FEM responded by stating that if a specific lamp was causing issues, it may be an option to explore using shuttering on specific lights, but would need to see the commissioning report in the first instance.

A resident from Taylor Close had previously expressed a concern about the final exit safety light, which appeared to be directed towards her property. The FEM responded that this was due to be changed/adjusted on the coming Monday (10th. Dec.).

**A.O.B.** (to be notified in advance please)

A resident raised a concern about the alarm response times. The FEM explained that the alarms are remotely monitored 24/7, and that the monitoring station contact the keyholding company to attend site. The FEM had not had any success in finding a local keyholding company and the closest available was G4S, who were based in Maidstone. The FEM did acknowledge response times do vary, dependent on levels of activity.

The FEM informed the meeting that the School did take the issue of security seriously and that an alarm system was an insurance requirement. He assured those present that the School was aware of its responsibility to ensure any activations were kept to an absolute minimum, as they are intrusive to our neighbours.

A recent incident where the alarm was active for a prolonged period over the weekend was particularly frustrating as caused by staff error. This was addressed and did result in disciplinary action against the individual involved.

A Taylor Close resident from No. 24 raised the issue of a Planning Notice relating to tree work on the site directly adjacent to her property. The FEM had not seen the formal Notice, but explained that it had been initiated by a direct request from her neighbour about an overhanging branch. The resident requested that no reductions are carried out to the Oak tree adjacent to No. 24 as this shielded the view of the pitch lights. The FEM assured her that her request would be observed.

The FEM confirmed Christmas shutdown dates of 24th Dec. – 2nd Jan, however, the Sat. a.m. letting on 29th Dec. for Little Kickers may still occur. (Since confirmed.)

Meeting Closed at 20:30 hrs.

Proposed Date of Next Meeting: **June 2019** – *date to be confirmed and circulated.*