

Oastbrook
Telston Lane
Otford
Kent TN14 5JZ



Public Consultation Otford Primary School
KCC/SE/0439/2012

Dear Sir,

Following the public meeting/consultation evening held at Otford Primary School and the recent publication of your planning application to expand the school, I wish to make the following observations.

- 1 Although it appears from this proposal that the school numbers are only increasing by 70, taking the school roll from 350 to 420, you have failed to mention that over the last 30-40 years the roll has gradually risen from aprox 200 in the late 70's early 80's, to the proposed 420 - ie a doubling the school roll in that period. During that time, KCC has done nothing to improve the situation with respect to responding to the growth in car usage by staff or parents, whereas Otford Parish Council has taken active steps to try and ameliorate the situation by doubling the size of its car park. Unfortunately we are now at a point where it is impossible to expand the current car park further and the only solution would be for more parents to walk, or for somebody to provide or assist with an alternative car park.
2. Bearing in mind that at least 40% of pupils come from outside the parish boundary, either through parental choice, or forced on them by lack of spaces in the surrounding towns and villages and that this is likely to grow as the school becomes more successful and local large developments become populated. I would respectfully suggest that alternative parking facilities are more likely to be able to be provided by KCC making a compulsory purchase of green fields under the "exceptional circumstances" rule, than for OPC to go down that route.
3. The village outlined in it's Parish Plan, written in 2008, that a "green" car park could be provided (solely for school use) in the field behind the school playing fields, with vehicular access opposite Bubblestone Road and with a pathway between the car park and the school giving direct access, thereby eliminating any safety problems associated with the village car park and removing a continuous problem with respect to traffic and children in the High Street at school opening and closure times. It could also be used by the extra school staff (paid or voluntary) that currently have to use the village car park, some on an all-day basis, rather than the transitory use, which is it's main function in catering for the village hall, shops, walkers and recreation field users. The issue of being in the Green Belt should not be too great an obstacle since recently the school had no difficulty in building two extra classrooms on the edge of their playing fields, which are in the Green Belt.
4. I would like to point out that safety of the children does not start and stop at the school gates, it also encompasses safe transit to and from the school and by attracting more pupils you are exacerbating an already difficult situation.
5. What will happen to the children that currently attend OPC and live in the Sevenoaks area when Sevenoaks primary school expands to its proposed 600? Will they still travel to Otford, or will they be expected to transfer to Sevenoaks, thereby freeing up spaces for Otford children.



6. I now come to the proposed building plans. There is little point in objecting to the new usage/development of the swimming pool area, although on a personal basis I think that deliberately letting such a facility (which was paid for by the parents of my era) run into decay and then quoting expense of maintenance and resulting lack of usage as a reason for redevelopment is bordering on the criminal.
7. As the "new" part of the school was built during the 60's I am sure you are aware of any problems involving asbestos and will have taken them into account during the removal of the existing facilities, both at the swimming pool and with the proposed "moving" of the school room window-wall.
8. General questions and observations:-
 - a. Para 3.3 refers to air-sourced heat pumps and having witnessed several similar fan driven system
 - i. What is their noise level?
 - ii. Is it constant or intermittent?
 - iii. Where will they be situated?
 - iv. Will they be running all night?
 - v. Is there a polar plot of their noise profiles if not, in which direction do they face?
 - b. para 3.5 - it is not stated what the consumption of the new block will be, or of the heat pumps, but as the "spare" consumption of 2 of the existing phases is only 52A, it will put the overall consumption perilously close to the maximum available, which must be questionable.
 - c. Para 3.8 - does the 1170m² hard playing area include the area set aside for on-site car parking?
 - d. From the table in Appendix B (Lisa Alexander's letter), it can be seen that there are 36 staff employed (not counting cleaners) and that only 6 of them do not drive to work, leaving 30 that do drive. The school only provides 11 parking spaces (plus one disabled), meaning that 19 drive and will expect to park in the Parish car park. It should not be down to the parish to provide suitable parking spaces.
 - e. The travel plan mentions a good percentage of children that walk to school "on one day a week", but no figures are given - what is this percentage? From my observations there are far more that are driven than walk.
 - f. The travel plan mentions a feasibility study into a walking bus route from the village car park to the school, but to date no such report has been issued. There has been an attempt to implement a walking bus from the East of Otford (Tudor drive area), but to my knowledge this no longer functions and the proposed one from the West, never started!
 - g. The mention of lack of street lights has been passed to KHS several times and rebuffed as not current policy, in fact street lights are being removed or lighting hours being reduced for environmental reasons. They would also effectively reduce pavement width as they cannot easily be placed on private ground.
 - h. The speed of vehicles during school in/out times is a perceived problem and not supported by data. Indeed at in/out times the speed through the village is reduced to a crawl at best, resulting in queues along the length of the High Street, expanding

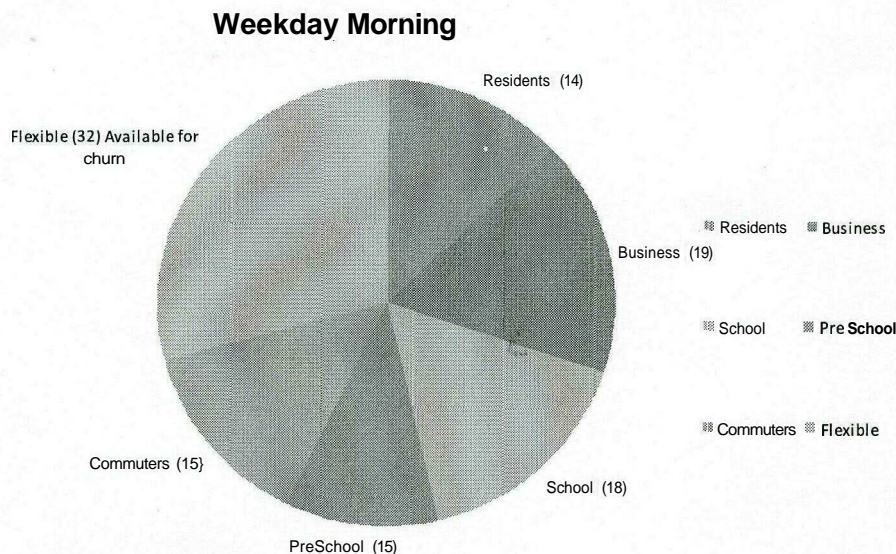
towards Rye Lane in one direction and the Sevenoaks Road in the other. These queues are exacerbated by the uncontrolled random use of the Zebra crossing by parents and the give way at the High Street junction with the pond.

- i. The lack of and reduced width of some pavements again is a KHS issue that they are unable to resolve due to the narrowness of the road and the classification (listed) of adjacent buildings.
 - j. Appendix D (the Jacobs survey) shows that the parish office is within the curtilage of the school. It is not.
9. I attach some data for you to consider. This data was presented to "Otfordians" last June following a request from them to "do something" about their car park. The data was collected over a period of 3 days and interviews regarding parking habits/reasons were held with those that had the time. Since then other random surveys have been conducted in response to specific questions by residents. The current situation is that the Parish Council intends to introduce "pay-and-display" with tariffs set such that short-term parking will not be penalised, but long-term will be.

Prior to this survey it was thought that commuters were responsible for blocking the bays.

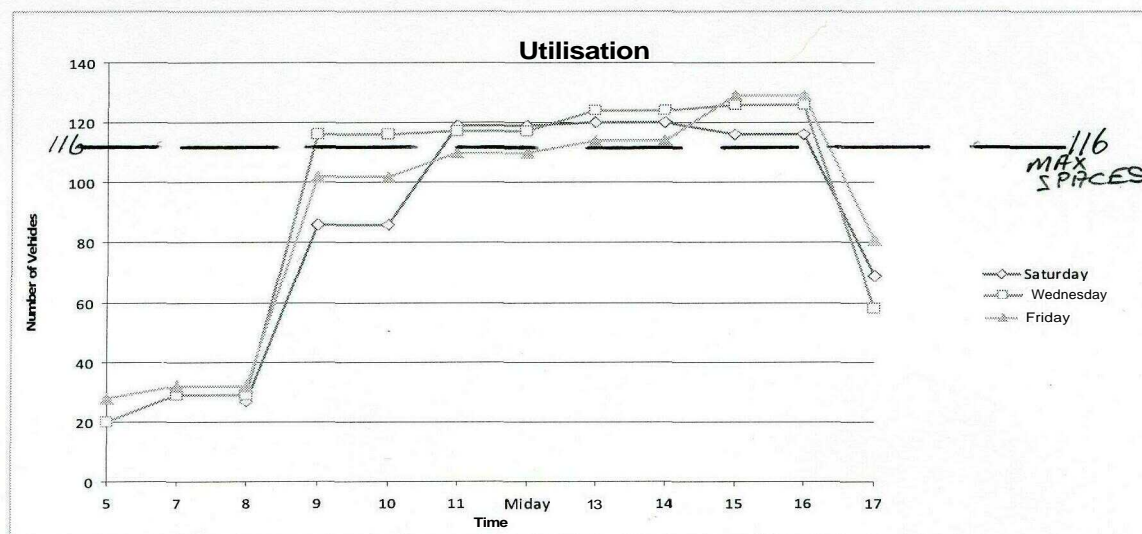
There are currently 114 parking spaces plus 2 disabled bays available.

The pie-chart below was collated at 9.00am over 3 weekday mornings and presented to the parish on June 29th 2012. There are 28 residents vehicles in the car park overnight (figures verified at 5.30am, and 6.30 am). 14 remained at 9.00am.



The maximum number of parking spaces is 114 + 2 disabled.

From the dotted line indicating the 116 parking spaces available, you can see that the car park is currently over utilised between 8.45am and 4.00pm



10. I understand that Mr Sheldon (Chairman of the Parish Plan Committee) has carried out an impromptu survey of cars carrying children into Otford and over 3 days has collected data from several popular parking areas as well as the main car park.

I summarise this data for you.

11. The school travel plan (from a hands-up survey) indicates that 22% of children arrive in their own car and that 33% of the remaining share cars. You have already admitted that 40% of the pupils come from outside the parish and ipso facto are driven to school. $40\% = 198$ children = aprox 150-160 cars, which equates to Mr Sheldon's figures for on-street and car park usage. On top of that you have the residents of Otford who drive and drop-off their children on their way to work as well as those that return home under the premise that it's too dangerous for their children to walk to school. This of course is a self-fulfilling prophesy.
12. Otford has reached saturation point with respect to cars and parking and any further expansion of the school will exacerbate the problem and the resultant safety aspects. The current situation might be helped if there was a "lollipop lady" on the zebra crossing and parents and pupils did not cross between stationary cars or parents "drop-off whilst waiting in the high street jams.
13. Of course it must not be forgotten that the car park is required for ALL attendees to the Village and Church Halls at the same time as pupil drop-off time. The growing number of parent's cars is impacting on the financial viability of the halls as well as the shops.
14. The transport assessment by MLM is so flawed as to make it risible. As stated above, the school parents are not the sole users of the car park. The Village Hall is losing trade as a result of the already overcrowded situation, there is a pre-school operating from the Church Hall and there are of course the shops that require somewhere for their staff and customers to park. There are also the walkers and the recreation ground users - all conveniently forgotten in this report. The concluding paragraphs 6.9 and 6.10 are contradictory in themselves. In 6.9 it states that - *Improvements to the car park will attract more parents to use it and congestion "May" still arise within it.* It certainly will!

15. Para 6.10 states that:- *"Overall it has been demonstrated that with continued effectiveness of the travel plan and the future proposals for the village car park there are no transport or highways reasons to prevent the extension of the school from its current maximum pupil roll of 350 to 420. "* This statement conflicts with the statement above that says congestion *"may still arise "*

16. Although I appreciate the school requirement to increase the class sizes, I am unable to support this application and therefore support both the Parish Council and the Otford Society in their objections. This expansion is felt by the majority of Otford residents that it will become the straw that breaks the camels' back. The only way I and the majority of "Otfordians" could support the venture would be for KCC to support and fund the "green" car park in the field next door to the school as indicated in our Parish Plan. This would of course require compulsory purchase of the field, which the Parish Council would support, but they would be unable to either fund or request.



Cllr. J Edwards-Winser

Cc Cllr. N Chard, KCC member
Otford Parish Council