

**From:** Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services

**To:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

**Subject:** Proposal to expand Wickhambreaux by 35 school places starting from September 2018

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** None

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet Member decision (16/00135)

**Electoral Division:** Canterbury South East (Michael Northey)

**Summary:** This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to expand Wickhambreaux CE Primary School for September 2018.

*Recommendation(s):*

The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to agree to:

- a) Authorise the Corporate Director - Education and Young People's Services to issue Public Notice to expand the capacity of Wickhambreaux CE School from 105 to 140 pupil places, with a published admissions number of 20 from September 2018 (subject to planning permission being granted);
- b) Allocate £350k from the Education and Young People's Service Capital budget;
- c) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel (Interim) to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
- d) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record Of Decision.

Should objections, not already considered by the Cabinet Member when taking this decision, be received during the public notice period a separate decision will be required in order to continue the proposal in order to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Canterbury district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2016-20 identified a future pressure in the Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux Planning Area. The 2017-21 edition of the Commissioning Plan presented to Cabinet Committee on 24 November also identifies a growing need for

additional primary school places in the planning area, with a predicted deficit of up to 7 Reception Year places.

- 1.2 A new housing development of 85 units is planned for Littlebourne. The expected pupil product from this development is 20 primary aged pupils. The primary contributions at expansion rates will be allocated to the capital project planned for Wickhambreaux CE Primary School.

## **2. Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed to permanently increase the capacity of Wickhambreaux CE Primary School from 105 places to 140 places. The PAN for the school will increase from 15 to 20 for Reception Year entry in September 2018 and subsequent years.
- 2.2 There is currently a planning application in for the school to be provided with new facilities. A small extension will create a new group space. The school currently has a staff room that doubles up as a classroom. This will be extended to give the school a room that will be a dedicated classroom and a store room will be extended to create a staffroom.
- 2.3 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place between 7 November and 5 December 2016. A public meeting was held on 21 November 2016.

## **3. Financial Implications**

- a. Capital – A feasibility study has been completed and the design has been developed. The estimated cost of the expansion is £350k. Developer contributions towards the project amount to £180k.
- b. Revenue – The School will receive increased funding through the Delegated Budget. The rising roles will be protected in line with KCC Growth Funding Policy. Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the School to resource a new classroom which at present is at a value of £6,000 per classroom.
- c. Human – The School will not need to appoint additional staff as it has sufficient staff to cater for the additional 5 pupils per year group.

## **4. Vision and Priorities for Improvement**

- 4.1 These proposals will help to secure our ambition that “Every child and young person should go to a good or outstanding early years setting and school, have access to the best teaching, and benefit from schools and other providers working in partnership with each other to share the best practice as they continue to improve”. as set out in Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2016-2019.
- 4.2 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2016-20 identified the need to commission the extra provision in the rural area of Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux. The Plan mentioned a specific need to increase capacity at Wickhambreaux CE Primary School.

## **5. Consultation Outcomes**

- 5.1 A total of 132 written responses were received. A summary of the comments received is provided at Appendix 1.

- 5.2 A summary of the views and comments given at the public consultation meeting is attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

## **6. Views**

- 6.1 The view of the Local Member:

*Cllr Michael Northey - Member for Canterbury South East*

“I support the expansion of places at this wonderful school. In the past local children living only a few hundred yards away have sometimes found it very difficult to gain places as the school is so popular. However I very much recognise the particularly difficult parking problems around the school area, which persist all day. It is the one parish council, of the many which I attend, where even at 7.30 pm I find it almost impossible to find a parking space. So I recommend that in order to extend the school a realistic traffic and travel plan is put into place for the twice-daily school run.”

- 6.2 The view of the Headteacher and Governing Body:

*Ann Campling, Headteacher and Claire Dwyer, Chair of Governors*

The School already exceeds its 105 capacity, due to a variety of circumstances and lacks space with which to accommodate all aspects of school life. Most notably, there is no staff room accommodation for staff to have lunch, or meet to discuss professional issues.

The School has written the School Travel Plan which it has sent to the Architect for inclusion in the planning application. This Travel Plan puts forward suggestions to mitigate any foreseen parking problems. The parking problems currently are a community problem, not purely a School issue.

As the Proposal is to only increase the School roll by 5 pupils for year, we feel the impact will be minimal. The capacity would eventually be 140, but not for several years, as the new intake would be starting in 2018. Our current roll is 111, so this would mean an increase of 29 pupils. Some of these pupils may be from the local area and indeed walk to school and not require transport by car.

The School has done everything in its power to secure its success, and has received two ‘Outstanding’ grades from HMI. It is an asset to the community, to the local Canterbury Teaching Alliance group of schools, and the wider educational community.

The Governors are in full support of this new development for the School, as it is an appropriate juncture for the next steps in development of the education in the local area; it will give opportunities for other local families to choose Wickhambreaux for their children.

- 6.3 The view of the pupils

The children had the opportunity to discuss the proposal in groups. Their views on the proposed extension were positive as it would give the children more space and

they would no longer have to do work in the hallway. They were pleased that the staff would be getting a staffroom.

The School Council discussed the issues with the road outside the school. Members of the School Council said that they felt happy, confident and safe because the teachers see them across the road and people in the village are friendly and stop for them.

*Is there anything that could help improve crossing the road?*

- We could have a zebra crossing or portable traffic lights.
- Some cars go too fast, we don't know what the speed limit is but we think it should be 15mph.
- We need a bigger path, but we should make sure all children walk on the path and not the road.

*What do you think about the parking in the village?*

- We think the village needs allocated parking, so as not to park in front of people's houses.
- It's a bit busy, but I feel safe. We should have a drop off space, maybe by the wall.
- We need signs to tell children to walk on the path.
- Cars should not park half on the pavement as it makes the path smaller.
- We need a monitor for a drop off point, with a big sign for the parents so they know where to stop.
- We should do a survey around the school about how safe children feel walking to school.
- Some children ride bikes and their scooters, which is really good.
- We need to make sure that Lorries don't come through the village when it's time for school.
- We think that there should be parking tickets for people staying all day.

*How do you feel about the school having some building work to make it a bit bigger?*

- It will be good for us as long as there aren't too many more children, but if it's a few that will be fine.
- We would like extra space to do work in or catch up on homework.
- We think that it will be good as we don't have much space in school.

#### 6.4. The view of the Area Education Officer:

Wickhambreaux CE Primary School is an "Outstanding" school as judged by Ofsted. The school is popular and oversubscribed and for entry in September 2016, 44 applicants selected the school as a preferred choice. This increase of 35 school places will be phased over a 7 year period and will help to meet the predicted shortfall. During the last three years, Wickhambreaux CE Primary School has admitted over its current PAN of 15 in order to provide sufficient places for families living in the village. There are several housing developments proposed in this area, including Littlebourne, Preston and Ash, which may create further pressure in the locality. Issues have been raised during the consultation period regarding traffic and parking and the safety of the children. The design team has worked with the school on a new Travel Plan in liaison with the Parish Council, as part of the planning process.

## 7. Delegation to Officers

7.1 The Officer Scheme of Delegation; under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution, provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. For information it is envisaged, if the proposal goes

ahead, that the Director of Property & Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

## **8. Conclusions**

- 8.1 The increase in capacity at Wickhambreaux CE Primary School will provide additional primary places in the Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux planning area where a shortfall of Year R places is predicted. The increase is also linked to new housing in Littlebourne. This small enlargement will add an additional five Reception Year places to the capacity per year and is in line with our vision to ensure that children and young people in Kent get the best start in life as set out in KCC's Strategic Statement 2015-20 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent' (2016 – 2020).

## **9. Recommendation(s)**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform is asked to agree to:

- e) Authorise the Corporate Director - Education and Young People's Services to issue Public Notice to expand the capacity of Wickhambreaux CE School from 105 to 140 pupil places, with a published admissions number of 20 from September 2018 (subject to planning permission being granted);
- f) Allocate £350k from the Education and Young People's Service Capital budget;
- g) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel (Interim) to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
- h) Authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member without requiring a new Record Of Decision.

Should objections, not already considered by the Cabinet Member when taking this decision, be received during the public notice period a separate decision will be required in order to continue the proposal in order to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

## **10. Background Documents**

### 10.1 Vision and Priorities for Improvement

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/vision-and-priorities-for-improvement>

### 10.2 Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2016-20

[www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision](http://www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision)

10.3 Consultation Document and Equalities Impact Assessment.  
<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Wickhambreaux>

## 11. Contact details

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## Proposal to expand Wickhambreaux by 35 school places from September 2018

### Summary of Written Responses

Printed Consultation Documents distributed:	150
Consultation responses received:	133

A summary of the responses received showed:

	In Favour	Opposed	Undecided	Totals
Governors	2	0	0	2
Staff	19	0	1	20
Parents	72	3	1	76
Other Interested Parties	17	16	2	35
<b>Totals</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>133</b>

25 of the respondents indicated that they were also a resident, of whom 15 were opposed to the proposal.

Below is a selection of comments that cover the main points and views received during the consultation period.

#### **Parents in favour of the proposal:**

- The staff have given up their staff room in order to provide the children with optimal learning environment and deserve all the support they can get for the outstanding education they provide.
- The proposal would mean such a better way of education for our children and for the people in the village. House prices are reflective of having an amazing school.
- The modest increase in numbers and extension to the school is more than acceptable; it's a great school providing a great education and should not in any way be considered 'exclusive' and have its doors closed to the requirements of others. The school is an asset to the village (keeping it alive!) and will continue to thrive but only if allowed to do so.
- This is the most amazing school but sadly it is lacking in sufficient space. I highly recommend that permission is given to give the go ahead for the extension.
- I have found it to be a wonderful school for both my children. The level of education they receive is tremendous and I would want that to continue, not only for my family, but for the generations of the future who may attend the school.
- We are fully in agreement with the proposal; given that the school offers outstanding provision, it seems sensible to expand that opportunity to an increased number of children. Equally, more children will make a small village school more financially viable, which seems like an entirely pragmatic way forward.
- The extension has been thoughtfully designed and will have no impact on the appearance of the existing building. The school is currently well staffed and I do not see a problem with taking in additional children.
- I find the school an excellent environment that not only provides superb pastoral care, but also strives to bring the most out of every child with a wide range of extracurricular activities. In society where we have so many schools failing and struggling to achieve average levels, I do not understand how there can be any opposition at all to extending and giving funding to an absolutely outstanding school.

- Our daughter is thriving in the school and we would welcome the school having the facilities and ability to provide further opportunities to additional children in the area and appropriate facilities for staff to allow them to continue to support and challenge the pupils.

#### **Parents with Pre-school aged children:**

- I know from having a younger child at pre-school in the area that a place at Wickhambreaux is highly sort after but there is a feeling that there are not many places available and it is difficult to get in. Raising the number of places to 20 per year extends the chance that more local children can go there.
- The proposal is essential in ensuring that our children continue to receive the first class education the school provides, while an increase in the roll number will allow others in the locality to benefit from this provision.
- As a resident of Wickhambreaux village and a parent of a Year 2 pupil and another due to start (fingers crossed) in September next year, I would like to register my husband and my support of the school expansion.
- I have two children at Wickhambreaux CE Primary School who both greatly enjoy their time there and I hope that our youngest will also join them there. The school puts a great deal of effort into the wide range of activities to ensure that they are enthused and make excellent progress.

#### **Comments about the parking issues:**

- At times parking is difficult due to the number of cars, especially at the end of the day when there are no after school clubs. If feel this is something that should be given further consideration to achieve harmony between the school and local residents. It is a shame there is nowhere close by where a walking bus could be run from, which would alleviate the issues.
- Perhaps some solution to the parking concerns raised by Wickhambreaux villagers could be found such as a dedicated drop off parking area in walking distance to allow parents to avoid clogging up the centre of the village.
- Parking is a very large part of the locals' concerns, and understandably so. Parents, teachers and residents must work together to come up with workable solutions, in order to alleviate congestion in the village. The school is a wonderful environment, the children thrive there and it is a huge asset to the local community.
- There seems to be a belief that the school is the main cause of parking problems in the village. However I witness parking difficulties on weekends and in the evenings. I don't think that an increase of 30-40 pupils will make a massive impact on the parking problems around the green.
- Clearly, like every other school in the country, there are going to be parking issues. I believe the school is looking into how we as parents, can help alleviate this problem but I do **not** believe that the problem is just a school problem.
- The school unfortunately lacks the support of the local residents due to what they call parking issues.
- I am a resident myself and I am confident that the parish council will be able to pursue some ideas that a number of residents have positively brought up in order to create more parking spaces (for example, along the playground). Parking space is a problem for the local pub as well (with summer weekends especially crowded) and in some areas of The Street (where the local taxi company has its fleet, for example). It is not the sole consequence of having a school in the village.

#### **School Governors in favour of the proposal:**

- This is a great opportunity to extend this excellent provision and to improve resources and facilities for the whole school. Whilst school staff and governors have been proactive in suggesting to parents how they should bring their children to the school there is

undoubtedly more to be done. I am sure solutions will be found and the school will welcome working on further initiatives with the local community.

- As a governor, I am fully supportive of the excellent work that the school provides for its pupils and wholeheartedly support the planned opportunity to provide the same opportunity to more pupils in an improved environment, enabling more children to experience the fantastic education programme.

#### **Members of Staff in favour of the proposal**

- Offering more places to children in an outstanding school can only ever be good.
- I have never worked or visited anywhere that I feel has more to offer its students. The school is unique and strives to provide all students with every opportunity to experience the joy that learning can provide.
- I don't have a proper space to plan and mark in between lessons. I often mark my books standing in the hallway. Having an extra classroom and staffroom would definitely alleviate these problems.
- The children here are given the freedom to be their own individual person and as a result are some of the happiest, confident and polite children I have had the pleasure to work with. There is however the lack of space and this expansion would only do greater things to give the children the chance to reach and surpass their full potential.
- The fact that there is no dedicated staffroom has had a noticeable effect on staff well-being and sense of 'family' as there is no longer a place where we can relax and socialise away from the children. Currently we have to take our breaks in a classroom where we have no suitable adult furniture, having to perch on low tables or sit in child-sized chairs.
- Our children are happy and confident and continue to make us proud in all they do.

#### **Comments from staff about the parking:**

- I feel that the parking issue is a community problem and is very common in all villages across the country. I feel that this should not be a reason to oppose the proposal.
- As someone who drives to work, I see daily, the status of the parking situation before, during and after the school hours and there is not a problem. There are plenty of spaces for the residents once all staff are in school and I have never been unable to do my job due to a lack of parking spaces.

#### **Other interested parties in favour of the proposal:**

- School funds are continually being cut and can have a detrimental effect on a school. Wickhambreaux School suffers greatly as they have a small intake. These are true concerns. Additional intake will enable more funds to support the school; this will prove an advantage to both the new intake and current pupils at the school. I understand many existing parents support this proposal.
- Excellent schools should be allowed reasonable expansion to provide quality education for even more children.
- Wickhambreaux is an archetypal village school – one which treats its pupils as members of an extended family in some ways. The children are known individually – their characters, their concerns and any academic shortcomings – or indeed strengths – they all benefit from this personalised attention. I cannot underplay the fact that Wickhambreaux has achieved the remarkable feat of being classified by Ofsted as an outstanding school for the second time in a row – with marks high above the average.
- The school provides an amazing opportunity to local children and their start in life. It is now key to focus on what's important for the children of the future. The local community contains some personal agenda and parking issues are not related to the actual plan. School drop off and collection is difficult at every school across the country.
- The Wickhambreaux Primary School is excellent with an active energetic Head Mistress. The activity associated with the school contributes to village life.

- I have experience of Wickhambreaux School both as a past parent and foundation governor. I see it as a quintessential village primary school of the highest order and something to be valued and preserved at all costs by the parents and community alike. Everything should be done to maintain its viability and to retain its current ethos as a CEP school. All I have heard and read about this project is essential to help to retain this jewel in the crown of primary education. Its loss would be another nail in the coffin of village community life.

#### **Comments about the parking:**

- I do appreciate that the villagers are affected twice a day for about 20 minutes by the traffic caused by dropping off / collecting pupils. Although traffic passing by the school would have to go slowly and keep vigilant when children are leaving, they can still travel if they need to during this time. They would, I suggest, be far more affected by the increasing number of taxis parked along the street coming and going at all hours, and the pub.
- Wickhambreaux village lends itself to having parking issues but no more than other schools in neighbouring villages. It is less a reflection of the school's impact on the village but a symptom of modern living. The initial intake will have marginal impact and concerns of parking stress is unwarranted. An additional 5 per year. This intake remember is gradual thus allowing compromises to be made in the future if required.

#### **Parents opposing the proposal:**

- As far as I can see, the proposal will not create any net gain in the education of our children. I do not consider the creation of a better staff room and store room sufficient grounds to recommend approval. If the current staff room is used in part for classroom teaching, the teaching arrangements will need to be reconfigured. Staff need their own room for discussion, meals and the opportunity to recharge their batteries in the breaks. It is not appropriate to use it as a teaching room. There is no need for additional room; the existing room should be used for the purpose it was intended.
- Since there seems to be no proposal to increase staff numbers from September 2018, in order to cater to any increased numbers children, I and my husband have concerns that teaching standards at the school may drop.
- One of the school's current strengths is its small size and ability to provide a focused and nurturing 'family' environment for the children. The school's facilities are already a little stretched to cater for the current capacity of 105 places. An extra classroom would help alleviate the current pressures but would not help support an increase in its PAN by an additional 35 pupils.

#### **Comments about the parking**

- Parking is already quite difficult in the village at the commencement and end of the school day. The road system could not support the influx of an additional 20-30 vehicles dropping off/collecting children.
- The proposed 33% increase in pupil numbers will increase local traffic around the school at drop off in the morning and pick up in the afternoon by a matching 33%. Very few, if any, of the additional pupils will come from Wickhambreaux. The demographics of the village make this very clear.

#### **Other interested parties opposing the proposal:**

- The traffic caused by parents bringing children to and from school has increased over recent years to the point where there are many more vehicles than spaces, resulting in parents parking dangerously. Many have no respect for residents, parking across their driveways, preventing them from getting in or out, and are abusive when politely asked to move. They park with wheels up on the village green causing damage to the grass that is nicely maintained, and just about anywhere else. The village hall has a capacity for 120

and this is where children have lunch, so how are 140 plus teachers going to fit without a safety issue? Just another reason this school is not suitable for expansion. I would also like to point out this is a very historic and beautiful village in a conservation area, that is being totally blighted by all of this. I've also spoken to residents that have children in the school, who also feel the school has got too big for this very small village. I, along with many other residents, feel any increase in numbers at the school could well result in a very serious situation happening.

- At the times parents are dropping off and collecting children, the village is absolutely packed solid with traffic. It's so bad delivery vehicles cannot get through. This could be catastrophic should an ambulance or fire engine be needed. Wickhambreaux is one of the smallest and most unsuitable villages for expansion of a school.
- The safety of the children, their parents, and other members of the public is at risk. The majority of the children are driven into Wickhambreaux to attend the school. There is no demand for expansion to accommodate the needs of Wickhambreaux.
- We appreciate the need to find additional school spaces but this should be done in places that have the access, facilities and infrastructure to support this. The school is in a rural location on a narrow street with limited public transport and lack of facilities.
- During the day the teachers and staff park in the village causing congestion and parking challenges for residents and business. The pub is struggling and threatening to close if solutions are not found.
- I am a local resident. It seems this school has become a victim of its own success – at least compared to other schools in the area – hence the intense demand for places at this school, but not at other local schools. The message here is for the quality of these other schools, and future planned schools, to improve and hence create their own increased demand.
- Safety is the main concern directly in front of the school. Those responsible for the possible approval of these plans could be seen as indirectly or partially responsible, if there was a car accident involving a young child attending the school. In view of this, it would be safer for the school to reduce its numbers and pursue a policy of concentrating more on other existing schools to improve their quality.
- Wickhambreaux has enough difficult parking and congestion issues from its own residents, including a taxi firm who has four cars, all parked on the street. To ask us to absorb even more traffic, more parents and more children is not only dangerous for all concerned, but wholly unacceptable.
- The school is obviously part of the essence of the village and has a reputation of excellence and popularity. However, the school is PART of the village – it does not take precedence – as indeed any other 'part' does not. This will only exacerbate the present parking problems, which include the discourteous attitude of some parents of children at the school, which are causing residents and businesses stress and frustration.

#### **4 Villages Conservation Society**

Re: Objection to KCC's proposal to increase pupil intake at Wickhambreaux School from 105 to 140 commencing in 2018 with 5 extra pupils in Reception and thereon progressing through the school.

The 4 Villages Conservation Society wishes to make known its objections to the above proposal based on the following:

1. Housing developments creating the need for increased primary school intake are situated in Littlebourne, Preston and Canterbury. Wickhambreaux is classed as an unsustainable location for building apart from minor developments of fewer than 5 houses as per the following planning policies:
  - a. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

b. Canterbury District Local Plan 2006 (adopted)

c. Canterbury District Local Plan, Publication Draft 2014, applicable until 2031

d. Rural Settlement Hierarchy Study of Canterbury District (2011)

The Society feels expansion of local schools should be centred on those areas where developments are already under construction or planned to avoid unnecessary car journeys e.g. Littlebourne has a much larger site, with plenty of room for expansion, and much better access by car and public transport. The village has facilities not available in Wickhambreaux including a doctor's surgery and a village shop with a post office. The bus service into Canterbury and surrounding areas is excellent. This village has a much larger population including primary school age children. The proposed new development will provide a further 80 family homes. To expand Wickhambreaux School under these circumstances seems a very short-sighted solution as 5 extra pupils per class year will result in much disruption in Wickhambreaux without providing a long term solution to the need for school places in the surrounding area. It seems obvious that within a short time, other schools with more space for expansion and better access facilities will be required to accommodate the expected increase of primary school pupils. Financially and logically we believe a far more sensible solution would be to proceed with the immediate expansion of schools able to accommodate larger numbers of pupils. No case has been presented which justifies expansion here.

2. Wickhambreaux is recognised as an exceptionally beautiful ancient village with many listed buildings. In the past, when Kent County Council produced a list of the most picturesque villages in Kent, Wickhambreaux was one of the top five. The whole of the centre of the village and its setting is a conservation area.

The heart of the village centres around The Green, which is bordered by a Grade 1 listed church, a water mill, a manor house, an old rectory, an ancient Inn, a converted farmhouse and Bell House where the curfew was tolled. The Street, the location of Wickhambreaux School, is directly off the centre of the village. This is an extremely narrow, ancient road, originally housing the artisan community and obviously not built to accommodate modern day traffic. Most of the houses have no front gardens, access being directly from their front doors onto the road which has no pavement, resulting in cars being obliged to park tightly up to the residents' windows and doors. This obviously creates problems for the residents at all times, but is much exacerbated during the school day when at least 51 extra vehicles (school's own estimate) arrive to drop off and pick up children and visit for special events. There are additional vehicles, parked all day, belonging to the people working in the school and kitchen. In addition, parents and carers waiting to pick up pupils, temporarily block access to the road for residents and other traffic needing access as they congregate in the road outside the school as there is no other place provided for them.

3. The Conservation Society is concerned that the education authority is going against a national, in fact world-wide policy to reduce CO2 pollution. Discouraging unnecessary car journeys is a prime example of how local authorities can make a contribution to this aim. Even now, not all those within walking distance of the school do walk. The idea of increasing the number of pupils, who obviously will need to travel by car, is in direct opposition to government policy to lower pollution. The Conservation Society would like to make the point that car emissions cause pollution which has been proven to have a negative effect on the actual fabric of buildings – particularly ancient buildings of which there are many in this small village, and there is no possibility of reaching the school by public transport. As a conservation society we are anxious and concerned to preserve the fabric and environment of this quintessentially English village, already being eroded by the large number of cars brought into the village by the school. The planned increase in size of pupil intake by approximately one third (105 to 140) will have what the 4 Villages Conservation Society considers to be a serious negative effect and therefore we wish to oppose the application.

# Wickhambreaux Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Chenice Sparkes,  
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Marisa White  
Education Officer  
Brook House  
Reeves Way  
Whitstable  
CT5 3SS  
03 December 2016

Dear Ms White,

Re. Wickhambreaux CE Primary School - Proposed Expansion

I am writing on behalf of Wickhambreaux Parish Council to object to the application to increase the number of pupils from 105 to 140 at Wickhambreaux Primary School. The reasons for this objection are listed below.

## Lack of Sustainability

The proposed increase in numbers is contrary to current planning policies. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Canterbury District Local Plan 2006 (CDLP) form the main basis for assessing local planning decisions and applications. In addition, the yet to be adopted emerging Canterbury District Local Plan Publication Draft 2014 (CDLPPD) will constitute the basis for policy projected until 2031. At the core of each document is the principle of achieving sustainable development which is to be "seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking" (NPPF p.4 para.14). The CDLP states: "The City Council's key development objective for the rural area is to retain and support development that promotes sustainability and adds or will add, vitality and viability to the rural communities" (p.2 para. 1.12). The CDLP has a key aim to achieve this policy by reducing dependency upon the car in order to decrease carbon emissions, improve the quality of the environment and offer alternative forms of transport.

The CDLP and the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Study of Canterbury District 2011 (RSHSCD) commissioned by Canterbury City Council (CCC) to identify and prioritise development in sustainable rural settlements identifies Wickhambreaux as a village with very limited sustainability and suitable for minor development only. Neighbouring Ickham and Stodmarsh which the school also serves are designated as hamlets with "no key sustainability services" (p.33 para. 4.12). This has been tested by a planning application for Wickhambreaux in 2011 proposing the development of 14 dwellings which was refused (CA/10/01022/FUL). One reason given was "the proposal represented an unsustainable form of development by virtue of the lack of facilities within the village of Wickhambreaux and poor public transport links and subsequent reliance on journeys by private vehicles. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies BE1 and C1 of the CDLP and SP3 of the South East Plan".

Pupils at the school from outside of the village who form the majority rely almost entirely upon use of the car. Mrs Campling, headmistress, informed us at the consultation meeting that currently 85 families arrive by 51 cars. This does not include the number of staff cars arriving and parking in the village all day. Alternative modes of transport for Wickhambreaux are virtually non-existent. It has a very poor bus service which is not possible to use in conjunction with school times, no train station and little scope for walking/cycling from anywhere more than a mile away. The latter is particularly limited given the age of the pupils.

## Over Development of Numbers

The proposal involves a permanent increase in numbers from 105 to 140 from September 2018. This major increase by 33% is not a natural growth rate for any school or village. Without additional

permanent teachers this can only decrease the amount of attention each child receives and subsequently the quality of education.

The plan to increase gradually the numbers by 5 children in Year R which over time will work through the school is flawed. It assumes that a family wanting a place will only want one for a Year R child. Realistically, families moving into new housing developments in nearby sustainable locations could have older siblings who presumably would not be refused entry so the increase in numbers would be rapid. Given that the school roll is greater than its stated numbers now, it is possible that the proposed number of 140 would soon be exceeded.

Mrs Campling stated at the consultation meeting that local children were always accepted. Thus, there is no case for expansion and the resulting negative impacts of an increase on the children and the village would be suffered for no real reason.

Wickhambreaux forms part of a much larger Conservation Area assessed by the Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Seaton Conservation Area Appraisal (2011) and adopted by CCC as a supplementary planning document. This appraisal along with the CDLP, the RSHSCD and the CDLPPD all designate Wickhambreaux and Ickham as suitable for minor development only. It is generally stated by CCC that this is less than 5 houses. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that there will be a future increase in parish demand by 33%. Indeed, another reason for refusal of planning application CA/10/01022/FUL was that it did not constitute minor development being contrary to policy SP3 of the South East Plan.

#### Highways and Parking

The geographic location of the school at the narrow entrance to the village and the historical nature, form and character of the Conservation Area are not conducive to an increase in pupils or cars. The village roads follow the form of the medieval road layout. They are narrow being able to accommodate only one car's width in places and have very few passing places with no pavements or street lighting. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes The Street as "predominantly built up to the road edge. This character area contains 17 listed buildings and 23 locally listed properties. The form, layout and character of this street hark back to a much earlier era. Until 1966 the road still had the central drainage gutter from the Middle Ages and is still known locally as Gutter Street."

These geographic and historical factors along with the numbers of people and cars arriving during school drop off/ collection times severely threaten safety and present serious highways concerns to the Parish Council. The arrangements for the collection of the current roll of 109 pupils with associated vehicles are far less than satisfactory. It involves a crowded gathering of parents, some with pre-school children, dogs, buggies and often ride on toys waiting in the middle of the road outside of the school grounds. The road is extremely narrow, lined with parked cars and without pavements, safety barriers at the school gate or street lighting. After collecting their children parents using a car either manoeuvre them out and drive through the crowd or walk up the middle of the road to their cars parked on The Green or at the junction of Seaton Road and The Street. At the same time some parents are walking their children home through this situation. This chaotic, dangerous daily event also involves non-school vehicles needing to drive through the crowd in order to access the village. To add at least another 35 children to this mix with a resulting increase in cars is totally unacceptable and irresponsible.

The availability of parking in the village is extremely limited and there is simply not enough space for the number of vehicles requiring parking. This was clearly demonstrated by the vociferous comments made at the consultation meeting. The village is at saturation point due to the features highlighted above as well as the functions it performs. The village and public house do not have car parks, the majority of houses have no parking facilities and there are parking demands made by the numbers arriving to the village for the school, public house, general deliveries as well as residents and their guests. Essential services such as refuse collection and a fire engine have been prevented from accessing properties for which residents have sought answers from the Parish Council.

Wickhambreaux is one of the most attractive villages in Kent and functions as a tourist and leisure magnet. Its location near the Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve also increases the number of visitors. The owners of the public house have regularly approached the Parish Council concerned that their business is suffering as customers cannot park.

This situation is not new and is not caused solely by the school but it has greatly deteriorated and now poses a serious and insurmountable problem. The current Parish Council along with many of its predecessors have constantly tried to seek solutions by consulting with the many relevant authorities. These have included the emergency services, CCC, the Police, PCSOs, Serco and KCC Highways. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be a permanent, viable answer.

#### Lack of facilities

The original part of the Victorian school dates from 1869 with the site being small and cramped by both the village confines and its own size. It already contains an extension built in 2006. The increase in numbers despite the proposed extension would make the site even more cramped.

The school will not be self-contained as it will still rely on using Parish Council facilities such as the village hall and playing field for essential activities. The proposal will not remove the hire costs of the hall or provide absent facilities. The village hall is currently used for many purposes including breakfast club, worship assemblies, dining, reading, evening events with parents, plays and after school activities. The playing field is used for sport, sports day, fund raising events, the annual school fair and an outside classroom in summer.

#### Health and Safety concerns of Village Facilities Use

The village hall only has seating capacity for 120 persons as a condition of fire regulations which in turn affects insurance. It would not be possible for the entire school to use the hall together. The Parish Council will be investigating whether the fire service or insurers wish to comment upon the increase in numbers. It is possible that it will not be acceptable or strict restrictions will be placed on the numbers using the hall at any one time.

The playing field is accessed by the school along a narrow road without pavements or street lights and it forms a blind bend. The field itself does not have water, electricity or toilets. If a child requires these facilities, it means staff need to leave the field with them which obviously reduces the staff/child ratio and has safety implications which would be worsened by more children.

#### Alternative Proposal

While we appreciate that KCC has an acute shortage of school places, it does not mean a desk top exercise should be undertaken of expanding any possible school. Despite the proliferation of housing developments in the Canterbury District, local conditions mean that not every school is a sitting target with many other factors coming into play.

The RSHSCD and the CDLPPD identifies Littlebourne as our nearest sustainable, rural service centre which should be given priority for development. The RSHSCD advises "such centres should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development" (p.10 par. 2.4). It continues "the imperative of ensuring that most additional development takes place in the most sustainable locations remains" (p.10 para. 2.4). The CDLPPD states that there will be a strategic approach to the location of development. This involves "development at some rural service centres" (para.1.62). Again, the plan to expand Wickhambreaux is misguided and contrary to planning policy especially as Littlebourne has permitted development for over 80 houses.

Littlebourne has a primary school which offers a spacious site, playing field, car park and good road access. Development here would reduce the number of vehicles in the local transport network with all the resultant benefits to the communities and the environment.

At the consultation meeting, Marissa White, Area Education Officer, stated that Littlebourne School is not performing so well as Wickhambreaux. We suggest that it would be better to devote finances and resources at Littlebourne to improve education for these children who are clearly being denied the level available at Wickhambreaux. We would like to suggest that a federation is established

between Wickhambreaux and Littlebourne schools whereby teachers are shared. We understand this is a common approach already existing locally between Preston and Wingham Schools. The expertise of all the staff at Wickhambreaux could improve the standards of Littlebourne School.

### Conclusions

We feel that our objections are a fair and balanced representation of the current situation, reflect the views of the majority of our parishioners and aim to achieve a sustainable future. Consequently, we hope that our points are given the attention and consideration which they deserve as the proposal will have far reaching implications for residents. We suggest respectfully that the proposal to increase the numbers at the school is rejected.

Yours sincerely  
Chenice Sparkes  
Clerk to the Council

### **Parent undecided about the proposal:**

- I am undecided about the proposal as I can see that it would financially benefit the school however there are many pitfalls that have not been addressed. My first concern as a parent is the Health and Safety aspect of our children. There is very little walkway/pavement and parking is a nightmare. More children will exacerbate; many drivers are not considerate or conscious that children are in the vicinity – it is a time bomb waiting to happen. A reception child had a near miss accident only about 8 weeks ago. My next concern is the play area space; there is currently very little play area space per child. My last issue is financial. It is a concern that the school will require no additional staff with the increased student number, which indicates that we are currently over-staffed. At the moment the school generates over £20,000 from activities run by FOWS and School. We are never privy how this income is spent.

### **Other Interested Parties undecided about the proposal:**

- Parents frequently park across my driveway and wander off to see a teacher. I to have to use the drive every morning to go to work and again between 3-4pm to return home. Parking in the village needs to be addressed first.
  - In my capacity as Chairman of Wickhambreaux Village Hall, I would like to express some concerns regarding the proposed expansion of pupil numbers at Wickhambreaux Primary School. The school has an ongoing contract with the village hall whereby it has full usage of the hall from 8am until 5pm during school term times. Having no building of their own to provide for the role of a school hall, the village hall effectively provides this essential facility for the school, and is used for a wide range of activities including breakfast club, school assemblies, indoor sporting activities, school dinners, music lessons, school dramas, discos, and after school clubs. In order to comply with fire regulations and the hall's Premises Licence, there is a maximum allowed capacity of 120 seated individuals. Should the school's intake increase to 135 pupils as proposed, there could be a conflict with these health and safety restrictions, especially if staff numbers are taken into account. In essence, in order to comply with regulations, the school would not be able to assemble in its entirety in the village hall, and this factor needs to be taken into consideration as part of the decision making process.

**Proposal to expand Wickhambreaux by 35 school places from September 2018**

**Monday 21 November 2016 at Wickhambreaux Village Hall**

- **From 3.00pm – Planning Application Consultation, display of designs and plans for the small extension to the school buildings**
- **From 3.30pm – Public Consultation Meeting on the Education Case – 3.30pm**

In Attendance:	Michael Northey	MN	Local County Councillor, Chair of Panel
	Ann Campling	AC	Headteacher
	Claire Dwyer	CD	Chair of Governors
	Marisa White	MW	Area Education Officer (EK) - KCC

**Purpose of the Meeting**

- To provide information about the planning application consultation, including the opportunity to view the designs and plans for the proposed small extension to the school buildings.
- To provide the opportunity for parents, staff, governors and other interested parties to give their views and ask questions about the proposal.
- MN welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the other members of the Panel. MW explained the proposal in detail.

Designation	Comment	Response
Headteacher	<p>I first came to the school in 2000. The accommodation was appalling and damp so we had to improve or close. There are currently 109 pupils on roll (4 over PAN). We have no streams of income. Friends of Wickhambreaux School raise money. This year they pulled out all the stops. We couldn't make ends meet without that money.</p> <p>When I first arrived there was a deficit of £5,000 but since then we have always been in the black. We have rolled over £5, £78, £32. Once we rolled over £1,200. We have made sacrifices: we don't have a caretaker; we don't have 2 or 3 admin staff. We have a part-time finance officer to monitor the finances. We don't have to increase our staff. We are not in an area of deprivation so do not benefit from pupil premium money. This expansion will provide fantastic space for pupils already in school plus additional playground space. We have never turned away a child from the village who needs a place. The only way we can add to our budget is to agree to take extra pupils.</p>	

	I have arranged two meetings for parents to come and talk to me. You are welcome to come into the school to look around. Performance results from the school show that we are above the national average and above all other outstanding schools. We would still strive to maintain that standard.	
Local publican	I appreciate everything the school does, but it is totally in the wrong location. Three businesses: the pub, the school, the taxi company. I know there are only six teachers but there are 24 cars coming to the school. I may have to close the pub at lunchtime as the village gets blocked. The community is falling apart. Everyone is squabbling. As a small business in the village it is not sustainable.	
Parent	We are very happy that our child goes to this school. There has always been a problem with parking and traffic coming through the village. Add that one of the businesses has purchased extra cars which cause a blockage in the village. Shocked that people will put a parking place above a child's place at school.	
Parent	We are losing sight of the children. If we work together, talk together, we could solve the problem. We could car share. If we just spoke to each other without aggression and anger we could solve the issues. We want to work together.	
Parent	I have three children at the school. I live in Preston and drive in every day and probably annoy local residents. It is very difficult to find a space. I can understand what it's like to have something pushed onto you as a housing development in Preston caused problems. Change will happen; the population is growing; we must work together with parents and the school. There is a way forward.	
Staff	I live in Littlebourne. I can't get out of my road in the morning sometimes, because of the parking. It's the same in Bridge and Wingham. I do sympathise but this problem is not unique to Wickhambreaux.	
Resident / Governor	This is not just an outstanding school but has been outstanding in two consecutive inspections. That service to children in Wickhambreaux, plus those from neighbouring villages is second to none.	

	<p>Educationally if you are crammed into a box it is very pressurising. We are concerned as governors but are also concerned about working conditions for staff. This development will enable staff to have better accommodation. Educationally, those extra numbers should come from local places.</p>	
Resident	<p>Parking: last night at 7pm when I came home the place was full; I could barely get down the street to get home. People have two cars.</p> <p>Last year I did a random survey of parking around the green. There was an outcry about staff parked there all day. Where are the staff parking as they were not parking on the green? Staff parked on the green, carried stuff to school, then came back to move the car elsewhere. This is a community issue for the village. The parking problem is just as bad in school downtime. My vote goes for education rather than the car.</p>	
Resident	<p>On the one hand this is about school places. Wickhambreaux needs more places because of a housing development. The Headteacher is telling us that this is a fantastic school and if this does not happen there will be no money. We had a parent not parking properly so we called the police out. He was told that under the Highway Code he was committing an offence.</p> <p>If school is outstanding and fantastic then with an extra 30 places it won't stay outstanding for long. It does not add up. With 40 extra cars they will be queuing to come into the village.</p>	
Resident	<p>Why Wickhambreaux? Housing developments? They could all go to Littlebourne. That would be an easier solution,</p>	<p>MW: Littlebourne is not more oversubscribed, it has been through a difficult time in the last few years from an educational perspective. It is working with Bridge and is now growing in popularity and has a good Ofsted judgement but it is not as popular as Wickhambreaux. We could expand Littlebourne but at this time it would not be as popular and would also have problems with traffic and parking. That's why we approached this school to</p>

		consider and consult on expansion. We may in the future need to look at expanding Littlebourne.
Resident	Our lives are very difficult due to parking across our drive. People drive the wrong way down the one way street - one was a teacher. I put bollards outside when we leave.	
Resident	Every day teachers park on the corner. Lorry drivers can't get round. In the last 10 years it's become worse. I have had to buy a couple of cars. I can never park outside my house so keep two cars outside and use them to access my drive. I've been here 22 years and in the last 3 years it's become absolutely ridiculous	
Resident	I think the problem where we live is parents arriving at 2 mins to 9. They drive frantically round the green and park anywhere as they are late. You need to tell parents to arrive in good time,	
Resident	We have lived here 20 years. This is ruining our lives. You speak about the school and the building but you have not mentioned the parking.	
Resident	I have lived here 16 years and watched the school expand. At the moment about one third of pupils walk but most come from outside the area. The problem is where school is located – it cannot deal with the issue. A really good solution is to fund a school with what pupils you need to put there. We need parking and somewhere to drop off children. Car sharing? Before the proposal is agreed these points need to be considered. The planning application is going on and I am adjacent to it. I didn't realise that the school was growing in size. It is not clear on the planning application.	MW: The two are related but are separate statutory processes. If one went forward and the other one did not then nothing will go ahead. The planning application has been extended because there is a requirement to do more work on the Highways' related issues. Some solutions need to be found before the planning application goes forward. The school does not have a solution. That is the work that has to happen between now and trying to satisfy planners in order to obtain planning permission. The school needs to look at its travel plan now and will be open to looking at any suggestions that people may have. There may well be viable solutions coming forward. Schools are funded nationally now. The LA do not choose how to fund a school which

		<p>means that if a school is struggling financially it does not mean closure but it is not within the gift of the LA to hand money to the school.</p> <p>The school is saying that they like many small schools are facing a difficult financial position; the extra pupils will provide additional funding.</p>
Resident	<p>I have lived here 30 years. There is a parking problem which has got worse in that time. The demographic of the village has changed. One thing, parents stand in the middle of the road, with buggies, dogs etc. I can't think of any other place where that happens. Cars just drive through them which is a Health &amp; Safety issue. The school is on a cramped site, it would still be relying on the village hall and playing field. Could the school tell me whether they would want to use the hall and playing field? I think it's an excellent school and want people to come here.</p>	<p>Headteacher: I have looked at things to do with outside of school. I consulted Highways to look at ways of bringing parents in but at that time it was not considered appropriate as it slows down traffic. Perhaps a walking bus? We pay £3,650pa for use of the village hall. We were told that if we did not support the hall it would not be viable. We use swimming pool, Polo Farm, Canterbury High School. We have been asked not to park in front of the pub during school hours and have complied with that. We have supported our church and provide free printing for the church and others. We are not your enemy we are trying to provide an excellent education for your children. We are willing to listen to your suggestions. If my parents are parking outside your house and are being obstructive give me their number plates. I will have the parents in the playground. We are willing to work with you.</p>
Resident	<p>Parking permits? £400 pa? Some cars are left in the village all day. All I want is to be able to park outside my house.</p>	
Resident	<p>There is no greater joy in your back garden than listening to screaming children; it's a great joy. I would suggest to the community that they do everything to support the expansion of this school. Villages in France are beautiful but empty. Carrying this school is part of the community spirit and we should all work hard to maintain this,</p>	<p>Headteacher (in response to both comments): We are open for you to come and look at information. My Deputy has looked at the information. There are 71 children via 51 cars. Every year things change; the demographic changes. We promote a healthy lifestyle: cycle and walk. I honestly believe it is</p>
Resident /	<p>This is a church school and there is a</p>	

Church warden	very constructive relationship between the church and the school. I appreciate what the Headteacher has done. My driveway gets blocked from time to time and not always by the pleasantest of people. I understand the issue. There must be a solution where children can be dropped off further back and walk. There used to be a walking bus from Ickham but I've not seen it for years. In France they walk.	not wholly a school problem. We are more than willing to work with anyone on this.
Governor	This development is of a huge benefit to the school and the community. We fully accept there is an issue about parking. We have done what we can over the years to work with parents over parking.	
Parish councillor	I spoke to planning department as application ran out in November and arranged an extension. I had no idea school was being expanded.	Architect: we can extend the limit. There will be consultation with Highways on the travel plan. They won't be satisfied until travel plan is finished. Planning application will not go ahead until after that.
Resident	Does the planning application need a survey to show parking issues?	
Parent	We need to do a structured analysis of the cars that come in and out. It has already been mentioned that just as many cars are parked by residents when the school is closed taking up spaces. The resident who did the survey should be involved in this. Get together and identify the parking and the real problem. It's outrageous that people swear at each other. We need a body / committee to look at this and if the school is the problem they need to look at it.	
Resident	I am more than happy to put together a body so that it can be transparent and take it forward to planners etc.	Parish councillor: contact me and I will co-ordinate everything
Resident	If Parish council come through with a solution where will that be funded from?	MW: It would depend on the proposal. If proposals needed funding we would have to look at funding for this project. So for example, if the project costs 900k and the parking costs £2m that would not be cost effective. If project costs 900k and parking 35k that could be considered as part of the consultation.
Resident	If land could be purchased for 25k who funds it?	MW: Highways would not pay. It would have be KCC as part of this project if it was reasonable but we do not usually purchase land for parking as the funds are

		for the delivery of additional education capacity.
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**46 people attended the meeting.**