

Parent Forum – Parking

Wednesday 4th July @ 7pm

Mr Proctor opened the meeting, introducing the topic of the forum. Mr Proctor asked those present to identify their problems and concerns surrounding parking.

Mrs Burls advised that during her gate patrols in the mornings she had witnessed some dangerous driving and parking. There are many occasions where people park on the zig zag markings directly outside school. There are frequent incidents of inconsiderate parking over people's driveways, double parking and parking up on the pavement.

A parent said that double parking made visibility very poor when trying to cross the road, cars parked on both sides of the road, partially on the pavement and over driveways left very few safe places to cross.

A parent said that cars mounting the pavement are a real concern. There have been occasions when walking along the pavement a car has mounted, and continued to move along the pavement, in order to park. A few near misses have been witnessed.

A parent also said that they had witnessed someone attempting to use a double buggy, it was impossible to get past cars parked on the pavements.

Mr Proctor said that he is also concerned that an emergency vehicle would find access difficult.

Mr Proctor advised that several conversations have taken place with the council on this topic. The use of double yellow lines has been dismissed; this would make parking difficult for Bilton Road residents and is unlikely to be supported by them. It is also felt that due to the short time needed to drop off people would park on yellow lines anyway. We have been advised that there are only 2 parking attendants covering 40 schools.

A parent commented that they had seen parents driving into the school car park at drop off and collection times. Although the drivers appear to be driving with caution, not speeding or mounting the path, they shouldn't be entering school grounds at all. The new pots along the path seem to have helped as people no longer pull up on the path outside reception.

Mr Proctor confirmed that the car park is for staff only and ideally no cars should be moving during those times. All staff are in school by that time and deliveries tend to take place outside of these times.

A parent commented that the residents were mostly unhappy about the blocking of driveways. It is very frustrating not being able to access or exit your driveway. Taxis have been seen repeatedly parking on the markings directly outside school. There are several parents who park up and then leave their engines running, this is probably to keep the air conditioning going, however, this is causing a great deal of pollution which our children then have to walk through.

A parent mentioned that the food delivery van often parks in Bilton Road. As it is a large vehicle this can make exiting the driveways opposite difficult.

Mr Proctor then introduced an initiative called 3PR – 3 parking rule programme

- Care
- Consideration
- Caution

We recently had a meeting with the team who have been running this programme, very successfully, with other schools. The school will be provided with booklets, information, maps and guidance on how to implement the programme. There will be members of staff outside school at certain points, if children walk past the point they will be given a token. Tokens are then handed in to class. The class with the most tokens will win a treat for the class.

Some schools have had the children handing out tokens, due to the young age of our children it has been decided that we will have staff and any parent volunteers taking on this role.

One useful aspect of using this organisation is that they have established relationships with local councils, local businesses, etc. They have already negotiated designated parking for schools at many different types of location such as supermarkets and local parks. These parking areas are permit holders only; this ensures that the numbers are managed. Parents will be provided with details on how to apply for these permits, if appropriate locations can be agreed.

A parent raised concern that the parents who persistently park directly outside school will simply continue to do so.

Mrs Burls advised that research had shown that the use of large banners and having people visibly promoting the values of the programme can be a successful deterrent.

Mr Proctor said that some schools only handed out the tokens once a week. We are hoping to have sufficient people to be able to do this every day. We understand that this may not be the perfect solution for everyone but having spoken to the children in school we hope it will address the concerns that they raised.

During discussions with the children they commented that they didn't always feel safe. They couldn't see round parked cars, making crossing the road difficult, and they didn't like having to walk past cars that were parked on the pavement.

Mr Proctor explained that the school had been successful in a bid for funding to improve the security and safety at the front of the school.

We are hoping that new electric gates will be installed over the summer. Mr Proctor showed the plans.

These gates will prevent unauthorised use of the car park, ensuring that there is no traffic movement whilst there are children using the path at the front of the school. It will also provide a recessed area at the front of the gate, meaning that vehicles can pull in before gaining access to the school. This will ensure that authorised vehicles entering the school (such as delivery lorries) will not cause congestion on Bilton Road.

A parent suggested that people who choose to park in Bilton Road will still do so. They already have the option of parking a street or two away, which would improve the problem immediately, but they choose not to.

Mr Proctor agreed that it may take time but the success of the project in other schools suggests that it does have a positive impact.

A parent asked if it had been considered that Bilton Road should adopt a "one side parking only" rule this would reduce congestion and access problems, if cars only parked on one side of the road it would leave the road much clearer.

Mr Proctor advised that this had been considered but dismissed as unworkable. The 3PR team suggested it was unlikely to be supported by residents, is difficult to agree and has been seen in other areas to encourage more parking over driveways.

A parent asked if using signs that had been produced by children, as seen used in other schools, would be beneficial or have the same impact.

Mr Proctor is hopeful that the 3PR programme will have much the same effect, with the added benefit of being a full programme which has already been tried and tested. We will benefit from being given resources, guidance and making use of the relationships with local contacts.

A parent asked if the suggested parking free zone would make it safer to cross the road.

Mrs Burls advised that this was the aim. She continued to add that we need parents to make a sensible choice and leave the area directly outside school clear. We can ask, encourage and arrange alternative parking but we have no jurisdiction over the road or the parents. We are reliant on people doing the right thing.

A parent acknowledged that the school has no legal rights over Bilton Road or any power to challenge people over poor driving or inconsiderate parking. It is hoped that, as a school community, we would all work together to improve the situation for everyone. It is in the best interests of all of the children to resolve this persistent problem, although the school has no direct power it would be a shame if they simply gave up trying. At the heart of the problem is the children, we need to keep that in mind and continue, collectively, to keep on trying.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm