



Tonbridge Grammar School

Local Residents Meeting

Fri 9th Dec. 2016 19:30 – 20:30hrs

Meeting Minutes.

Attendees: Councillor Maria Heslop, Mrs Kay Topliss, Mr Nick Hebditch, Ms. Deborah Willock, Mr Edgar Lukes, Mr & Mrs Lawes, Mr John Flitton, Mr Bill Seakins, Mr Michael Guttman-Kenney, Mr Ian Terry, Mrs & Mrs Boughey, Mr Andrew Cowan, Mrs Frani Hoskins, Mrs Disbrey, Mr Nathan Marshall, Mrs & Mrs Hateley, Mr Peter Ingrams, Mrs Gooden.

TGS: Mrs Rosemary Joyce, (Head Teacher), Mrs Sally Dyson, (Chair of Governors) Mr Adrian Pitts (Assistant Head), Mrs Pippa Blackstone (Development Director) and Mr. Jeremy Kenyon, (Estates Manager.)

Apologies: Mr Graham Weston.

Welcome and introductions

Traffic Management.

Mr Pitts gave an update on the work of the Travel Action Group, which meets 3 times per year with representatives from the School, neighbours, TMBC and our local PCSO. There was discussion on the routes that students use to walk to the School, and the congestion at the bus stops on Pembury Road at the start and end of the School day. Mrs Disbrey shared with the meeting that the Judd School had recently had a Road Safety briefing to raise students and parent's awareness. Mr Pitts informed the meeting that there was on-going consultation with various agencies regarding the introduction of a cycle route to link up with the revised A21 dualling and Tonbridge Town Centre.

In response to a question relating to student parking, Mr Kenyon confirmed the Student Parking Policy had been reviewed and the number of parking permits increased to 17 to support reduced use of surrounding roads for student parking. There are currently 17 Student Parking permits issued.

Mr Kenyon had been contacted by a resident about the traffic flow in Deakin Leas when the School was hosting large events. In response, Mr Kenyon explained that the School does ensure we maintain a presence at the main gates and bus stops on a daily basis. Mr Kenyon went on to explain that on high footfall events such as Open Events staff numbers to support traffic management are increased. At the last Open Evening, for example, there were 7 staff members deployed beyond the School gates to dissuade visitors from thoughtless parking, and to encourage the use of the

voluntary one way system in Deakin Leas. Three shuttle buses were from Sainsbury's Car Park to encourage off-site parking were well used.

One resident commented on some bad language used on the football field by some of the 6th Form boys. Mr Kenyon confirmed he would raise this with the 6th Form team.

Lettings Update

Mr Kenyon provided an update on the School's Lettings, and emphasised that there was no change in our policy. Lettings continued to be managed carefully, with due consideration to any traffic or noise impact. The School will host Easter and Summer Activity Camps in 2017. These camps are popular, but levels of activity are still considerably less than a term-time School day. The Camps do not operate over the weekends.

There is a local election on the 4th May, which had not been included when the School Calendar was originally circulated to residents in the Autumn.

Building Development Update

In response to concerns raised about the levels of external lighting on the School site, Mr Kenyon explained the requirement for exits and pathways to be lit at night whenever people were on-site for health and safety reasons. The School had recently changed their cleaning contractors, which has allowed for a change in timings. The previous contractors were typically finishing their daily clean at around 10:15pm, which is when the lights were extinguished. The new contractors have been asked to be off-site by 9:15pm, enabling the lights to be turned off earlier.

Mr Kenyon shared with residents that the School had just submitted a planning application in support of a Conditions Improvement Fund (CIF) grant application. The grant application, if successful, is to replace the wooden and metal windows in the Old School Building, and for the installation of three external fire escape stairways, to allow for better use of existing facilities.

Multi Use Sports Pitch

Further to the Exhibition which the School held on 28th November, the School had received further communication from some neighbours. Mrs Joyce assured those individuals who had written in that the School was giving proper and due consideration to any concerns raised. There was discussion on communications generally, and in particular to the proposed pitch. The School agreed to look to establish an on-line portal, accessed via the School website to further support school communications with local residents. The portal could be used to communicate a range of relevant information to residents including, calendar, recurrent lettings diary, and minutes from Residents' and Travel Action Group meetings and any relevant updates on the planning application process. It could also be used to host further details of the proposed pitch.

Some neighbours expressed a view that the visuals the School had presented at the Exhibition were not clear enough, and there had been mixed messages from the School and the Planning Consultant. There was a perception that consultation with residents was being treated as simply part of a process, and if the School's intention was to submit the planning application before the end of the

year, did not allow sufficient time for meaningful dialogue. Clarification was sought about the Noise Survey that the School had commissioned, and how this would compare to the reality of actual activity on the proposed pitch.

There were further questions relating to the impact of the floodlights, and whether car headlights would temporarily shine on the rear of houses in Deakin Leas when vehicles were exiting the site. There was a concern raised that although additional landscaping had been mentioned in the design visuals, there was insufficient detail on what this would comprise of.

There was also a concern raised that the motivation for the pitch was driven by commercial reasons, rather than to provide students and the community with a recreational facility.

Mrs Joyce responded to these concerns reassuring residents that the School takes our responsibilities very seriously, and invests considerable time and effort in mitigating the impact of School activity with our neighbours. The primary objective of the proposed pitch is to provide a useable sports and recreational space for outdoor sports and activities for our students and for the local community. The proposal supports minimal lettings to assist in subsidising maintenance costs for the facility but the proposal is not commercial or profit making in nature. In response to a question about funding, Mrs Joyce clarified that the proposed facility is wholly privately funded.

Residents were invited to remain after the meeting if they wished a further opportunity to view the plans.

The meeting closed at 9:20pm.