

Parking Meeting Update 9.2.26

Thank you to everyone who attended the parking meeting and for the constructive way in which residents, the school, and the Staplehurst Ward Maidstone borough councillor Paddy Riordan came together. The shared aim is clear – to find practical solutions as a community to a problem that affects us all, ensuring children and residents can travel safely while maintaining positive relationships between neighbours and the school.

Issues Raised by Residents

Residents highlighted a number of serious concerns:

- Parking on pavements is blocking safe passage for children, parents with pushchairs, and local residents.
- Vehicles parking on the yellow lines directly opposite the school entrance are creating dangerous crossing conditions.
- Parking on the yellow zig-zag markings is putting children at risk during arrival and departure times.
- School events are leading to increased and unmanaged parking in surrounding streets.
- Staff parking in local roads is adding to congestion, with questions raised about why more use cannot be made of school parking facilities.
- Severe congestion at drop-off and pick-up times could potentially prevent emergency services from accessing the community.

These issues were acknowledged by all as unacceptable and requiring urgent joint action.

Solutions Discussed

A range of constructive ideas were put forward:

- Recruiting volunteers to support safe and considerate parking during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Exploring alternative entrances to the school to reduce pressure on a single access point.
- Investigating whether a “drive-through” or one-way system on the school site or in local roads could ease congestion.
- Lobbying for wider changes using best-practice models from other parts of the country.
- Continuing to raise concerns with Kent Highways to drive long-term improvements.
- Working with children on road-safety awareness and responsible travel.
- Further collaboration between the school, the PTA, residents, and the Parish Council to deliver improvements.

Action Plan – Next 3 to 6 Months

School actions

- Review options for greater use of on-site parking by staff where possible.
- Work with the PTA / community to recruit and coordinate parking volunteers.

- Explore feasibility of alternative entrances or a drive-through system and report findings.
- Deliver road-safety sessions for pupils and promote safer travel messages to parents.

Staplehurst Ward Maidstone Borough Councillor Actions

- Escalate enforcement concerns with Kent Highways and request monitoring of yellow-line and zig-zag violations.
- Seek advice on traffic-management models used successfully elsewhere and present options.
- Support applications for signage, road-marking improvements, or traffic-calming measures.

Joint actions

- Establish a small working group of residents, school representatives, and councillors.
- Collect evidence of problem times and locations to support requests for enforcement.
- Improve communication ahead of school events to manage parking demand.

What we hope to achieve

- Safer pavements and crossings for children and residents.
- Reduced congestion at peak times.
- Better cooperation between the school and neighbourhood.
- Clearer, enforceable parking arrangements around the school.

Next Meeting

The next meeting to review progress on these actions will take place in **July – date and time to be confirmed**. Details will be shared via the school, Staplehurst Ward Maidstone Borough Councillor , and local noticeboards. All residents are warmly invited to attend.

Thank you again for your commitment to working together to resolve this important community issue.

Mrs Wall and Paddy Riordan