

Progress on Church Road Traffic

The Parish Council has been highlighting the issue of traffic on Church Road around the sites of St Joseph's, Wyvern St Edmunds and St Andrews Schools for many years. Throughout this year it has been lobbying the police and Wiltshire Council for greater action to be taken to address parking which blocks the road for other users and dangerous driving such as driving on the pavement. Marti Hilliard, the parish councillor responsible for schools liaison has been actively working with local schools to encourage them to take further steps on the issue for over a year.

As readers of local press and websites will know the issue made the headlines in September with the return to school, and while the Parish Council did not participate in calls for civil disobedience it did call for a multi agency meeting to try and see a joined up approach leading to real change. With encouragement from Wiltshire Cllr Ian McLennan another campaigner on this issue, the meeting took place on the 2nd October with the heads of all three schools, senior representatives from Wiltshire Highways, Wiltshire and Parish Councillors, the police and local residents.

Everyone recognised that such a complex issue is not going to be resolved in one meeting, nor is one single change going to solve the problem. However we hope that the meeting marked a positive step forward which will lead to further action.

In the short term, Wiltshire Council (which has responsibility for parking enforcement) and the police (who are responsible for traffic offences) both agreed to investigate how they could increase visibility and enforcement action within the resource limits they work under. Wiltshire Council are also going to look at the possibility of improving the footpath from St Thomas' Bridge to Bishopdown Farm, supplementing the work already done by the Parish Steward and providing children from that area with another alternative to being driven to and from school.

There was a consensus that a longer term solution required the schools and other stakeholders to work together to update their travel plans,

which will provide data about how pupils currently travel and what alternatives to using cars they would consider. This work will then unlock access to government funding for projects to facilitate these alternatives.

The Parish Council and Wiltshire Councillors has committed to being part of this working group and Wiltshire Council has offered the support of its officers. We look forward to working together with the three schools on these long term strategies which will both improve the lives of local residents and have a positive effect on the environment.

