

Bower Ashton Residents Association

Seeking to improve and protect our local environment

Mr R White
Chair of the Board of Governors
Ashton Park School
Blackmoors Lane
Bristol
BS3 2JL

Please reply to:
Bower Ashton Residents Association
c/o Jersey Cottage, Parklands Road
Bower Ashton, Bristol BS3 2JR
grovesa@pbworld.com

24 March 2010

Dear Sir

ASHTON PARK SCHOOL: USE OF PARKLANDS ROAD

We write in connection with the inappropriate and unsafe use of Parklands Road as an entrance to the school facilities.

Bower Ashton Residents' Association represents the majority of the local population living in the immediate vicinity of Ashton Park School. As your neighbours we feel it only right that we convey to you the significant concern that is felt by local residents over the safety of pedestrians using Courtlands Road and the lower parts of Parklands Road because of vehicular traffic associated with the school.

In recent months very real concern has been expressed to us by those worried about the safety of themselves, their families and schoolchildren. This has been heightened by several incidents and near misses during 2010.

Current Situation

Vehicle Movements on Parklands Road and Courtlands Road

- a) The majority of the vehicle movements on Parklands Road and Courtlands Road are associated with the school. This traffic comprises:
 - Parents;
 - Teachers;
 - Pupils; and
 - Those using the school Sports' Hall.
- b) Many of these drive with little or no regard for pedestrians or local residents.
- c) Use of these roads has increased in the last few years.
- d) Traffic density is concentrated in the hours either side of the school opening times, and from mid afternoon to early evening. It is not uncommon for two-way traffic and vehicle queues to develop at these times.
- e) Parking of vehicles takes places regularly opposite the gate in Parklands Road during school hours.

Pedestrian Movements on Parklands Road

- a) The majority of pedestrian movements on these roads are schoolchildren attending Ashton Park School.
- b) These movements are concentrated at the same time as peak traffic flows.
- c) Some of the school pupils show little regard for traffic within the highway, including residents entering and exiting their properties, some of which have 'blind' entrances.
- d) Local residents of these roads include the elderly, those with small children and at least one disabled resident, dependent on a motorised wheelchair.
- e) Several of these regularly use the road at peak times, for example walking children to the nursery next door to Bedminster Cricket Club.

Bower Ashton Residents Association

Seeking to improve and protect our local environment

View of the Local Authority to use of Courtlands Road and Parklands Road

Courtlands Road and the lower parts of Parklands Road are unpaved, narrow and characterised by poor visibility as a result of tall walls and tight bends.

It is incontrovertible that Bristol City Council (BCC) has taken a consistent line, over many years, that this is an inappropriate route to the school premises on the grounds of public safety. Attached to this letter is a selection of some of the comments made by the Planning and Highways Authorities on this matter over the last ten years in response to approaches made by Ashton Park School. These include:

- *"The.....rear access via Parklands Road is not to be considered as a major access to the school."* Planning, 5 April 2000.
- *"In respect of providing a new entrance to the school off Parklands Road, the road is extremely narrow and has poor visibility onto Kennel Lodge Road. Hence the main entrance to the school and car park is to be used as the main access to the sports provision."* Highways/Parking, 5 August 2002.
- *"Any additional traffic would be hazardous in Parklands Road and would be hazardous to pedestrians using the lane, this is not a safe route to schoolNo parking should be provided on Parklands Road, it is too narrow.."* Development Control (South) 4 June 2003.

Since these statements were made, the situation has, in fact worsened because of the erection of an internal gate that separates the sports provision from the rest of the school. This gate is often closed during school hours, 'forcing' users of the sports hall to enter and exit by the very route stated as inappropriate.

In addition, school staff have been advising parents of prospective students (as happened on more than one occasion before Christmas), that Parklands Road represented *the* entrance for Sports Hall traffic, which in the context of the above statements, is also inappropriate.

Analysis

It is clear that the current situation of mixing school traffic and schoolchildren on these roads, encouraged by the use of the gate on Parklands Road is:

1. Contrary to the express wishes of the Local Authority; and
2. Unsafe.

On this basis, how is it that use of this route by schoolchildren and vehicles is maintained and even encouraged? Our Association would like to understand, given the seriousness of the subject and the weight of opinion expressed by the Local Authority, the justification for considering this as a safe route to school.

I would be grateful to receive your confirmation of the safe arrival of this letter, preferably to the email address given above and look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours faithfully

Alasdair Groves
Chairman

Cc Mr C Gardner, Headmaster, Ashton Park School
Mr M Hook, Local Education Authority (Health & Safety)
Mr J Dowling, Bristol City Council Highways

Enc. Annexe 1: Selected Responses made by Bristol City Council in Relation to Approaches by Ashton Park School for Increased Use of the Gate on Parklands Road

Annexe 1

Selected Responses made by Bristol City Council in Relation to Approaches by Ashton Park School for Increased Use of the Gate on Parklands Road.

Ashton Park School Meeting with Bristol City Council Planning Officers 5th April, 2000

Zoe Wilcox of Bristol City Planning commented:

“The entrance to the school is to be maintained at Blackmoors Lane off the mini roundabout and that the alternative rear access via Parklands Road is not to be considered as a major access to the school. It is only to be used for servicing access only”.

Ashton Park School Planning Meeting at Brunel House 5th August, 2002

Highways/Parking:

“In respect of providing a new entrance to the school off Parklands Road, the road is extremely narrow and has poor visibility onto Kennel Lodge Road. Hence the main entrance to the school and car park is to be used as the main access to the sports provision with a well lit and signposted route down the northeast section of the site”

Ashton Park School New Sports Hall Sixth Form Centre 6th February, 2003

Planning Application supporting statement:

Item 5 – Community Use of the Building 03/00154/FB/S:

“With the Sports Hall being a new opportunities fund project, the community users will enter the site via the main car park at the front. The route from the car park down the side of the existing buildings to the Sports Hall”.

Development Control (South) Committee 4th June, 2003

In response to Planning Application 03/00154/FB/S, the Highways Authority submitted:

“The access to the new facility should be via the existing Blackmoors Lane entrance, any additional traffic would be hazardous in Parklands Road and would be hazardous to pedestrians using the lane, this is not a safe route to school.

No parking should be provided on Parklands Road, it is too narrow.

There is a concern regarding the proposal for vehicles to use the Parklands Road entrance, the introduction of heavy goods vehicles would be detrimental to highway safety, poor visibility exists for those leaving properties and the situation is already poor as a result of the increase in the number and speed of vehicles using Parklands Road.

The gates to the rear of the school should be shut at all times other than when service vehicles arrive”.