

Walton Neighbourhood Plan Education Provider

Consultation Event 8th July 2015

Present: Lisa Emmanuel, Project Support Walton Community Council
Stuart Copeland, NPWG Chair
Andy Cox, Head Teacher Wavendon Gate School
Malcolm Davey, Chair of Governors, Wavendon Gate School
Melanie Saunders-Short, Head Teacher, Heronshaw School
Ian Northover, Chair of Governors, Heronshaw School
Louise Higgins, Senior Nursery Manager, Kiddi Caru
Dawn Delaney, Senior Nursery Manager, Kiddi Caru
Peter Kent, Director, Digby Consultancy

Apologies: Justine Cooper-Drake, Director, Giggles Pre-School

Introductions

SC introduced himself as Chair of the NPWG and local resident.

Andy Cox – Head Teacher at WGS for 3.5 years but has been in educational role in Milton Keynes since the 1980's. Today would like to understand where and when any housing changes are coming as the school is almost full now.

Peter Kent – Invited to this event due to business engagement being cancelled. Owns a training consultancy, has lived in Walnut Tree for 30 years and was born in Milton Keynes Village. Peter has watched Milton Keynes grow and so far it has “grown well”. Main concern is the East/West Rail Link, the effect on the older communities, whether the infrastructure can cope and also ensuring we continue to “grow well”.

Malcolm Davey – Chair of Governors at WGS has worked in MK since the early 90's, current lives in Fenny Stratford. Here today with a main concern for how the school will cope with future numbers and also the safety concerns with no formal crossing on the V10 near Walton Road. Has also noticed a marked increase in litter.

Melanie Saunders-Short – Head Teacher, Heronshaw School. Although the school has had a recent expansion her main concern is for the future with new houses being built, but also what happens to students when they leave the school as they consider themselves a “community school”.

Ian Northover – Chair of Governors, Heronshaw School and is a resident of Walnut Tree. As a school they have worked closely with MKC regarding the educational plans, expansion and car parking etc. Main concern is not wanting infrastructure and the area to slip.

Louise Higgins – Senior Nursery Manager, Kiddi Caru at Walnut Tree Local Centre since 1999 and a resident of Walnut Tree. Wants to see what is happening in the area and to see how they can support the process.

Dawn Delaney – Senior Nursery Manager, Kidd Caru at Caldecotte. Works in the community and can feedback to/from families. The nursery also feeds into schools and supports local families.

Neighbourhood Plans

SC gave a background on Neighbourhood Planning as introduced by the Localism Act. The intention is not to prevent growth and development but to ensure this occurs in an appropriate way for Walton. A summary of consultation results was reviewed, as displayed. The role of WCC was also mentioned along with what will be tackled through the NP or otherwise by WCC.

Group discussion.

AC opened discussion by stating that many of the issues raised through the consultation should start with people taking responsibility in the community.

Issues:

V10 crossing

SC summarised the position with this being an example of where the grid road system and infrastructure was not maintained: breached the principle of underpasses and footpaths do not connect.

MS-S – appreciates the grid road system but the current situation is not safe. Parents also report that the redways are not safe.

General consensus was that a crossing is needed and redways should be maintained better with undergrowth kept cut back and lighting improved.

NP should support community school ethos

AC suggested that the NP could adopt a policy to support community schools – which is the approach of both WGS and Heronshaw School. The ethos is that the school serves the local community, this also helps cut traffic from outside the area – although it was acknowledged that parents do still drive children to school on their way to work.

MS-S schools currently stagger their start times to alleviate traffic, but they also run breakfast clubs, so some parents drop children off early. Discussion was had with regard the MKCF land opposite Heronsbrook meeting place – this would make a point for additional parking – if a community facility were built there could it “share” the parking.

Some schools in other areas have agreement with pubs etc.

AC – look at pinch points – are there other community facilities which could be used for this purpose? WGS has no such facilities nearby. When/if the grid road extension is built to Church Farm – is there possibility of any of the MKCF land being used for this purpose?

AC – the school also promotes healthy living and walking to school, but parents need to feel the walking routes are safe.

Design brief for redways

The NP should support the principle of redways but there should be standard maintained in terms of lighting, landscaping and also access points. Footpaths should “go somewhere” and link to other footpaths etc.

LH – parents drive from Luton, Leighton Buzzard and all over MK to the nursery as they work in MK.

School catchment areas

Whilst heronshaw and WGS are community schools and aim to serve the local area, other schools do not promote the same ethos. Heronsgate and Walton High give priority to students who attend partner schools which includes schools at Kents Hill and across MK.

School expansion

AC – it would be difficult for WGS to expand. They would lose playground space and would not wish to promote the use of temporary buildings. It would only be an option if permanent build and was planned properly.

However, it is also against the ethos of a community school :

A two-form intake equates to 420 pupils and is deemed a good balance – the teachers know all their students etc

One extra form would expand to 600+ children which is then more difficult to really “know” them all.

There would also be an impact on traffic

IN – Even with good future plans, you cannot plan for parental choice – they make their decision on the status of the school and may move accordingly. Schools change.

IN – Health education is another issue. With reduced services from MKC and other organisation, there is a gap. There is little or no support for families.

LH – agreed there is a lack of support for early years – even when an issue is identified early, there is often nowhere locally for support.

AC – consider opportunity to utilise new/current community facilities for local services such as health drop-in.

LH – Speech & language support, drop-in clinics etc

MD – raised issue of bus stops being re-located and lay-bys becoming redundant. Size of buses through estates can also be an issue along with footpaths to and from bus stops – as at Walton Road.

Next Steps

SC thanked everyone for their input. The consultant will be drafting policies over the coming weeks. These will be shared publicly at the Autumn Fayre at MK Snap on 12th September.

The NPWG would like to maintain contact with the schools and also ask that today's information be shared with the wider education colleagues un able to attend.

It was agreed that representatives of the NPWG would attend the Walton partnership of Head Teachers in the Autumn with a presentation to share knowledge and potential opportunities to influence policies.

LE to email MS-S and AC to arrange the invite and put on Agenda.