

ROAD SAFETY & ACTIVE TRAVEL NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 2 (JULY – SEPTEMBER 2024)

INTRODUCTION

As we say goodbye to summer, we hope that you have all had the opportunity to keep active and enjoy the sunny weather.

At KCC, our Active Travel Team works hard to make active travel, such as walking, wheeling and cycling, an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent; whether to work, school or to visit friends and family.

This edition seeks to showcase the important work of the Active Travel Team and how your Community Engagement representatives work with them to identify potential schemes in line with your highway improvement priorities.

MEET THE TEAM ACTIVE TRAVEL

The Active Travel Team aims to promote healthier, more sustainable urban and rural environments by encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling, and other non-motorised modes of transportation. The team is split into three main areas of focus:

Active Travel Infrastructure – delivers innovative schemes that aid in carbon reduction, public health, promotion of sustainability and support safer speeds, including traffic calming measures and improvements to infrastructure (such as cycling lanes, pedestrian footways/footpaths, and greenways).

Active Travel Interventions – raises awareness of active travel through school travel plans, travel maps etc. and works closely with partnering organisations and businesses to improve and increase the active travel network. The team also supports districts with their Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and is responsible for producing a Kent Wide Cycle & Walking Infrastructure Plan (CWIP).

Safer Active Journeys Team – delivers pedestrian and cycle training, supports schools with starting walking buses, promotes the Living Streets Active Schools Programme and manages the School Crossing Patrol service across Kent.



The Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust welcomed visitors to their first Bike and BBQ event at Maidstone Hospital in August.

Representatives from KCC's Active Travel Interventions Team and Safer Active Journeys Team, along with Active Kent and Medway and Cycling UK, offered their cycling and bike expertise, supporting more staff to cycle to work, and are looking to provide more cycle friendly facilities on the trust's sites, including new lockable bike shelters at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.



DID YOU KNOW?

FUNDING FOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP) SCHEMES

We would like to take the opportunity to provide clarity on an issue which has caused some confusion. This is around how HIP promoted schemes are funded; that either KCC pays for all of these works or that HIPs are being used as a mechanism for KCC to make Parish/Town Councils pay for highways issues.

Under our Casualty Reduction Measures (CRM) programme, the Highway Improvement Team's focus is on implementing engineering schemes at crash cluster sites with the aim to reduce collisions and improve road safety.

However, we also appreciate that whilst prioritising our efforts based on known data (such as speed and collision data) is an established and sensible approach, we recognise that not all problems will be highlighted using this approach. It was for this very reason that KCC instigated the HIP process, allowing us to work closely with you to ensure that a community voice helps to prioritise our efforts and unlock funding for improvements that do not achieve sufficient priority through our countywide assessments.

This year our Community Engagement Team was given a budget of £300,000 to help support HIP promoted schemes across Kent. However, with over 300 Parish and Town Councils in the county, we are limited in the size of the scheme we can fund from this alone.

Whilst we do have many Parish and Town Councils across Kent that are able and willing to contribute to HIP promoted schemes, we recognise that not all local councils will have the resources to do so. In this instance, your Community Engagement Officer will work with you to identify other possible funding streams. This may be by liaising with KCC's Development & Transport Planning Team on possible developer contributions linked to planning applications in the area, or with the Active Travel Team on what funding they may have for related schemes, or by submitting a bid for Local Transport Plan funding in the Autumn for scheme delivery the following financial year should a bid be successful.

This year KCC is holding our annual Parish Seminars on two dates:

Wednesday 2 October (9am-1pm) – this Parish Seminar will be held virtually for those unable to make the in-person event.

Wednesday 20 November (9am-1pm) – this will be the first in-person Parish Seminar in five years, and is being held in the Lecture Theater, Sessions House, Maidstone.

We hope you can make it and look forward to seeing you there!

At KCC, we promote mutual respect in the relationships we have with members of the public, service users, clients, customers and each other.

As set out on page 4 of this newsletter regarding collaboration, whilst we cannot guarantee that a HIP promoted scheme can be delivered, we ask that Parish/Town Council's and County Members work with us to either consider an alternative scheme or acknowledge the advice given by our qualified Highway Engineers in instances where no alternative scheme can be found.

We all have the same goal, to deliver highway improvements for the people of Kent, and, as shown by the instigation of the Highway Improvement Plan process, we want to work with you to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome/goal.



THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS

Between July and September 2024, the Highway Improvements Team has carried out the following work in conjunction with Parish and Town Councils and County Members across Kent:

Parish/Town Council and County Member meetings - **63**

Number of HIP/Parish funded schemes delivered - **46**

Total value of KCC funded schemes (HIP budget) delivered - **£44,898**

Total value of Parish/ Town Council funded schemes delivered - **£14,026**

USEFUL LINKS

- [KCC Fault reporting tool](#)
- [KCC led consultations](#)
- [District Council services](#)
- [Kent Police reporting tool](#)
- [CrashMap UK](#)
- [DfT's Setting local speed limits](#)
- [Planned roadworks](#)
- [School travel plans](#)
- [Lorry Watch](#)
- [Community Speedwatch](#)
- [Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership](#)
- [Kent Road Safety](#)
- [Responsible Parking](#)

BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS IN KINGSTON, CANTERBURY

The East Kent Community Engagement Team, within Highway Improvements, received concerns from the County Member, Mike Sole, about a bus stop in the village of Kingston.

Residents were unable to access the bus stop in wheelchairs and we were asked to improve the disabled access to allow for better accessibility.

Following collaboration with our Public Transport Team, we came up with a solution which included installing an asphalt hard surfaced footway from the carriageway to the bus shelter as well as including dropped kerbs both sides of the road. The overall scheme cost was £3,662 and was funded using the team's dedicated HIP Budget.

As you will see from the before and after photos below, this is another great example of working together with our County Members and Parish Councils and getting a brilliant result for our residents, particularly those with mobility issues.



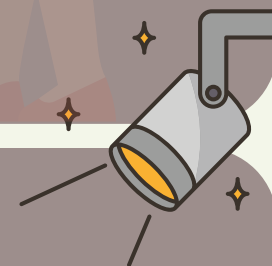
COLLABORATION

Whilst the Highway Improvements Team (HIT) are dedicated to delivering as many feasible Parish/Town Council and County Member promoted schemes as possible, it is also true that simply by being on a Highway Improvement Plan (HIP), with community support and/or with a funding stream identified, does not guarantee that an engineering measure can be identified or delivered.

Not only are we restricted by what is legally, physically and technically possible, sometimes there are just no measures that HIT can deliver that will resolve the concerns of the communities you represent.

However, we are not content to leave it there and we work across the Road Safety & Active Travel Group, for example with the Active Travel Team, as well as with wider Highways & Transportation colleagues, and externally with Kent Police, the District & Borough Councils etc. to look at the issues together. This allows us to benefit from other teams' knowledge, experience and resources to find the most suitable solution where there is one.

In each newsletter our aim is to give you an example of how we work collaboratively in order to provide the best service to Kent's residents via their elected representatives.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: SCHOOLS

Irresponsible parking during school drop off and pick up times is a constant issue for KCC, as a Highway Authority, and schools across the county. Whilst parents do ultimately have to be able to park somewhere, we appreciate that this can be hugely disruptive and frustrating for residents, especially in situations where this may present a potential safety hazard.

We are often limited in what physical engineering we can introduce that will change this behaviour. Even parking restrictions are only as effective as the District/Borough Council's ability to enforce these during peak times.

In cases where no physical engineering measures are suitable, HIT considers how we can address the enforcement and/or behavioural aspect of irresponsible and obstructive parking. This includes working collaboratively with both the District/Borough Councils as parking authority (where there may be opportunity to carry out adhoc enforcement of existing parking restrictions) and KCC's Active Travel Interventions Team who work hard to support Kent schools in educating parents and increasing awareness through a number of different initiatives.

This work with schools can be facilitated through identification of an issue through the Highway Improvement Plan process, but we also welcome Parish and Town Councils support in encouraging the schools in your area to continue to work with us, developing a School Travel Plan and enabling them to have access to support in their promotion of active and sustainable transport, as well as the provision of resources to assist with problematic parking and congestion.

Further details of the initiatives available can be found overleaf and in your Highway Information Pack 2024-25 (pages 55-56 relate).

Responsible Parking Toolkit – This initiative has two aspects; Schools can request a selection of free resources – such as banners, interactive flyers, and information leaflets – all of which encourage responsible and considerate parking, with options and differing designs depending on what specific issue a particular school faces (“keep off the zig zag lines”, “pavement parking”, and “be considerate of our neighbours”, to name a few). The other aspect of the Responsible Parking toolkit is the [Responsible Parking website](#); here ideas and best practice are shared regarding the distribution of the responsible parking messages. Schools can also use the online “catalogue” to order their free resources.



School Travel Plans and Jambusters – Schools are also encouraged to create and maintain a School Travel Plan (STP) using KCC’s [Jambusters system](#). This website provides schools with the ability to log in to their own individual profile where they can follow a template to produce a KCC approved Travel Plan document. They will also be able to easily update this annually to ensure the information is kept accurate year on year and receive relevant correspondence from the KCC Transport Planner. On the website’s homepage you can search for any school’s most recently produced Travel Plan. There are lots of free resources available to Kent schools and many of those can be accessed via their online travel plan management system.



Grant funding – When a school is engaged and has a STP Co-ordinator assigned on their Jambusters profile, they are invited each year to apply for up to £5k [grant funding](#), towards projects that promote and enable sustainable and active travel. For example, successful applications can include cycle/scooter shelters, welly storage, EV charging points, footpath improvements etc.



School Streets – The School Streets scheme involves temporarily closing a road to motorised traffic outside a school during peak drop-off and pick-up times, during term times only. School Streets offers a proactive solution for school communities to tackle air pollution, traffic congestion, and poor health and safety. These schemes encourage healthier lifestyles through increased active travel to/from school, by restricting motorised traffic at peak morning and afternoon times, to create a safer, healthier, and cleaner “School Streets Zone” outside the school entrance. You will find a case study of a current School Streets trial on the next page, and if you’d like to find out more about this scheme, we can provide a School Streets guide document which recaps the benefits, the considerations, and provides more detail about how these schemes are implemented.



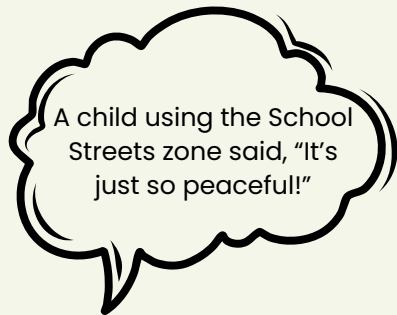
Walk once a week programme (WOW) – This programme is run in schools, in partnership with Living Streets, to encourage students to walk, wheel or cycle to school instead of drive. Children earn badges every term for travelling sustainably to school. On average, WOW schools see a 30% reduction in car journeys taken to the school gate and a 23% increase in walking rates. For more information on this scheme please visit [WOW – the walk to school challenge](#).

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL, DARTFORD



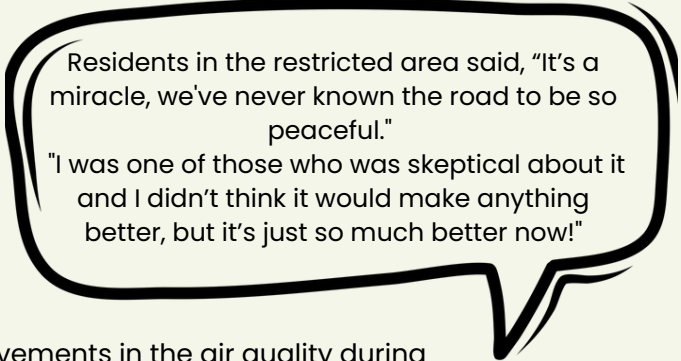
Since the last week of April 2024, KCC, in partnership with Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School has been operating a trial "School Streets" scheme on Chatsworth Road, Dartford. This was following exploration of options to address concerns raised by the school community and their neighbours as a result of congestion at peak drop-off and collection times, These included concerns of an unsafe and stressful environment (at times with volatile/aggressive exchanges) near the school entrance and poor parking creating a lack of visibility and blocking in residents. Parents reported feeling reluctant to walk/cycle/scoot to school due to drivers mounting pavements and stopping irresponsibly near the school entrances.

School Streets schemes offer a proactive solution for school communities to tackle air pollution, congestion and poor health and safety; creating a safer, healthier and cleaner environment for children and their families to travel to and from school, by restricting access to school and general through traffic under an Experiment Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) outside the school entrance.



As a result, Chatsworth Road, from its junction with Arundel Road, is restricted to motor vehicles using temporary barriers during peak times in the morning and afternoon periods. For residents that live within the School Streets zone, local access, via a free exemption permit, is being maintained and School staff oversee the zone and manage exempt vehicular access/egress whilst the School Street is in progress. Access for emergency services is also maintained at all times.

The feedback and monitoring activities that KCC and the school have conducted so far indicate that this scheme has been producing some positive results, such as a dramatic transformation of the area outside the school's main entrance, becoming much quieter and calmer for residents and families travelling to/from school.



Other positive changes are also being noted, such as improvements in the air quality during peak times and the amount of 'active travel journeys' (walking, scooting and cycling etc.) on the school run.

The consultation and the feedback survey links remain live until 21 October 2024, after which we will have more an idea of the successes and areas of improvement but ultimately, our intention remains to create a safer, and more pleasant space for our neighbours and the families travelling to/from the school each day. Parent and resident feedback, combined with ongoing monitoring activities, will be used to determine whether alterations to the current scheme set up could improve the overall experience and safety for those living and travelling near the school.

HAVE YOUR SAY

We value your feedback and would love to hear from you if you have any thoughts or suggestions as to what you'd like to see in future issues. Please complete this brief questionnaire which will allow us to ensure that our newsletters are providing you with the information that you would like to see.

[Have your say - Microsoft Forms](#)