



## LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

**DATE: 29 NOVEMBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: WALTON OAK SCHOOL CROSSING**

**DIVISION: WALTON**

## PETITIONS AND PETITION RESPONSES

### DETAILS:

A petition has been received relating to Walton Oak school. The petition has 317 signatories and reads as follows:

*Please sign this petition to encourage Surrey County Council to urgently take action into building a safe road crossing for our children. Walton Oak Primary is one of the only schools in the area without a zebra or road island crossing on the main road leading to the school. With roads only getting busier this situation is getting more dangerous by the day. Please help, all support is much appreciated.*

Lead petitioner: Hollie Park

### RESPONSE:

Since the previous crossing patrol left their post, county council officers have been in touch with the school to work with them in recruiting a replacement. Unfortunately experience has shown that at a small number of sites across Surrey it has been very difficult to recruit replacement school crossing patrol officers. This is not a problem unique to Surrey, for example we are aware that in a neighbouring local authority as many as 50 vacancies. As well as working with the school to advertise a replacement, officers have also arranged for the vacancy to be advertised on local social media accounts managed by the Community Partnerships Team that are used to engage with the local residents of Elmbridge. This has included use of a promotional video we have created of a school crossing patrol talking about their pride in their job that is available on the county council's YouTube channel. [https://youtu.be/BD6XtrzX\\_xU](https://youtu.be/BD6XtrzX_xU)

Our experience previously is that the most successful method of recruitment has been through advertising undertaken by the school via their schools newsletter or other communication channels with parents and the wider community. We have offered to work with the school to assess what opportunities there might be to advertise in local libraries, local doctors surgeries, local church notices or local shops perhaps. Experience has shown that schools are much better placed to know where to place such adverts in their local community because they have the local knowledge and already have links with local community organisations. If appropriate, a link could be provided to the "youtube" video alongside text describing the role in any online adverts or electronic communications.

## ITEM 6

The county council remain ready to fund a new crossing patrol as soon as one can be recruited. In the meantime we have informed the school that we can refund the cost of employing their caretaker at the usual pay rate for a school crossing patrol officer. We will be happy to pay the school promptly upon receipt of a correct invoice, and will continue to do so until a full-time school crossing patrol can be found.

There are already proposals for additional parking controls (yellow lines) on Ambleside Avenue to prevent parking in and around the roundabout junction with St Johns Drive. This can be seen in red in the edit of the scheme drawing below. It is expected that this will reduce the amount of traffic congestion and improve sight lines and safety on this section of Ambleside Avenue to the northwest of the school. More detail is available via this link (item 21). [Surrey County Council - Agenda for Elmbridge Local Committee on Wednesday, 14 July 2021, 4.00 pm \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#) It is expected that the additional parking restrictions will be implemented in the coming months.



Highway officers visited the school site on 6 October 2021 to assess the opportunities to improve the highway to make it safer to access the school. Upon initial assessment it is thought possible to implement a zebra crossing facility just a few metres to the south east of the existing school crossing patrol location. This will be subject to more detailed technical assessment, investigations and design. We estimate that such a scheme could cost between £60,000 to £100,000 to implement. Within Surrey funding and decisions on local highway improvements are delegated to the local committee of elected members. They usually have a long wish list of schemes costing over and above the amount they have available for investment, so this scheme would have to compete with a number of other schemes to be prioritised by the local elected members, and they are likely to have already allocated their funding to other schemes. If funding can be secured for future years then it would then be possible to commission detailed design and then implementation within the next two financial years. We wish it could be sooner than this, but this is the reality of how long it takes to programme design resources and contractors to implement such schemes alongside many others taking place across the county.

The county council's Safer Travel Team also offer a range of services to schools to help promote road safety and encourage more walking and cycling to schools which can be seen via the following link. [Road safety and sustainable travel for schools - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#). The team would be pleased to assist the school in creating a school travel plan and signing up for any of the services offered. For example the [Living Streets "WOW" initiative](#) has been shown to encourage more walking rather than using cars for the school journey.

**RECOMMENDATION**

For information only.

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Contact Officer: Duncan Knox

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