



GREAT CHART
with **SINGLETON**
Parish Council

Parish Office,
Singleton Village Hall
Hoxton Close, Ashford,
Kent, TN23 5LB

29th September 2022

Sent via email

Dear David Brazier

RE: Lack of safe walking routes to Chilmington Green Primary School

Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council are increasingly concerned about the lack of safe and accessible walking routes to Chilmington Green Primary School and the planned secondary school in Ashford.

The primary school opened in October 2021 and as a council we expected that walking access would be provided. We are now realising that this has not been the case and there is no current proposal to assist families in the local area.

Currently families attending the school must all drive as there are no safe footpaths towards the school at all. Due to delays in housebuilding, the main proposed route via the development, to the school, remains blocked off by Hodsons for safety reasons. This prevents even those living a stone's throw from the school from walking as they must get into a vehicle and drive out of the development and into the country roads.

The current access route is via Mock Lane which, apart from the area immediately outside the school, is a narrow country lane. It is also the access road for a cement works and a number of large cement mixers and lorries use the lane regularly. There is no pavement or footpath along this road.

A young child was recently knocked down by a car on Bucksford Lane at the designated, and signposted, crossing point between Ashford Community Woodlands. This is not an isolated incident. The statistics only collect information on fatalities and do not include near misses or fatally injured dogs. This misrepresents the issue and clearly goes against the Zero Vision campaign.

Further issues caused by other roads around the school include multiple blind spots, crumbling verges and overhanging branches. These push vehicles out into the middle of the road and make it difficult for two cars to pass.

Our understanding was also that adequate signage and vegetation clearance would have taken place on the Mock Lane/Chilmington Green Road junction before Chilmington Primary School was opened. This could have vastly improved the access and the safety of the users, and we hope that this will go ahead in the near future.

As the new intake arrived in September 2022, the increase in traffic was noticeable, and

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this will only increase as further year groups are added and the secondary school is opened. A parish councillor made enquiries about residents' feelings on the matter via social media over the summer. We have included these comments as an appendix to this letter.

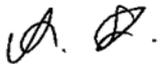
We request that KCC officers walk the route from The Street in Great Chart, Singleton Hill in Singleton or Cuckoo Lane in Kingsnorth, to assess the realistic safety of these roads, and would welcome the opportunity to join with your officers to provide local knowledge.

Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council continue to have discussions with developers regarding safe footpaths for families within the Chilmington development. We know that new and existing footpaths are being created and opened for the children resident within the development, but these do not currently allow you to walk to the school, and evidence of this has been attached as an appendix to this letter.

Worryingly, we are not aware of any plans being considered for safe walking from the local areas. Families walking from Singleton would need to walk along Bucksford Lane and Mock Lane. Families from Great Chart would either need to walk via Singleton, or to cross the A28, and then walk along Chilmington Green Road and Mock Lane. Families from Kingsnorth would need to walk along Chart Road and Mock Lane. Not one of these roads has a footpath or pavement and are all country lanes and therefore not marked for two lanes. They are certainly not in line with the KCC Active Travel policy.

We are keen to work with KCC officers to reach a resolution to this issue. The safety of our residents, young and old, is a number one priority and the current situation could be deadly.

Yours sincerely



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Ms Aniko Szocs
Parish Clerk
Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council

Appendix One

A parish councillor made enquiries on social media over the summer, and these are the comments that were made:

Question: *"If you live in Singleton or Great Chart do your children attend Chilmington Green Primary School. If yes, do you use the mode of transport you would rather use. Did you not put it down due to lack of path to walk child to school. Reason for asking is we as a parish council are trying to find out what can be done as we consider it an issue, but I wanted to know from yourselves if this is so. thanks for help in advance."*

Replies:

My girl goes there, we use car would love to walk but obviously not safe enough to get there.

I have to collect my niece and nephew quite often. I'd love to be able to walk that route to collect them from Singleton. At the moment I have to drive the short amount because I wouldn't feel safe walking.

My son goes there and twins due to start in September. We drive but would prefer to walk. Live on Swaffer Way.

My girl goes there we drive and it's so dangerous!!!

We'd love to have the option to walk!

We live in Deyley way and daughter is about to go into year 2. School is fab, but It's a massive issue that's needs sorting. As although we are lucky enough to be able to drive her to school, mock lane just isn't built to cope with that amount of traffic, especially with lorries for the brett site and vans using it as a cut through regularly. The road is in a right state and I'm not looking forward to the school run as we head into winter. Huge great big potholes at the side of the road and the amount of mud that's created when it's wet. Lots of parents pulling their kids out because of lack of access on foot. It's so sad. I'd love to be able to walk her to school as it's such a short distance. But I'd fear for my life x

When we moved here a year ago I wanted to put my daughter in the school but after realising there was no safe walking route I decided not to.

Also once secondary school opens what will happen then with all the increase in traffic. We will be applying for a place for our son but can't see anyway of him getting there apart from us dropping him in the car.

My son and daughter go to Chilmington, we would love to walk but it's just not safe enough so I drive them. When the school was in the temporary site in jemmet road we walked from great chart most days.

It is really concerning that such things are not put in place before a school opens. Its an example of how we still do not. This road from singleton and great chart is dangerous at best of times. The secondary school is in process of making the same mistakes.

When we found out Chilmington was opening we decided to move our children thinking it would be great for us all being able to walk and them having friends nearby, 4 years on and still unable to walk to school.

My children don't go to the school, but I often drive past and feel there needs to be safer walking/cycling ways to make this a viable option for parents.

My children are not that age anymore, but when driving past i think how awful, dangerous, and stressful the school drop offs must be. There must be a much safer solution.

Needs foot paths installed.

3 of my children went there but due to the fact of living so close and not being able to walk them there (I also don't drive) I had to move them . I missed every assembly and play / sports day due to not being able to get there.

This should of been thought about in the planning stages. What will it take before a child gets killed or maimed. Winter months once again are upon us and darker nights and darker mornings spend the money Now and build some paths please

The infographic is a grid of 12 items, each with an icon, a title, and a short paragraph. The items are: Health (heart icon), Road Sense (traffic light icon), Ready to learn (medal icon), Good mental health (head with star icon), Safety (shield icon), Social and Independent (person icon), Pollution (sun and clouds icon), Attendance and punctuality (puzzle pieces icon), Happy neighbours (smiley face icon), and Start young (hand holding heart icon). Each item's text is as follows:

- Health**: Regular exercise makes children healthier and reduces risk of obesity which can lead to heart disease, type 2 diabetes and other health issues.
- Road Sense**: By walking to school children gain road-sense and are able to learn about risk and therefore how to look after themselves and be safe.
- Ready to learn**: Walking to school helps children to feel more wide awake for the start of the school day and therefore more ready to learn.
- Good mental health**: research shows that walking helps children sleep well and be less stressed which makes them happier.
- Safety**: By reducing the number of cars travelling to school, the roads in the area become safer for everyone, especially around the school gates.
- Social and Independent**: Walking to school is sociable for children and helps them become more independent.
- Pollution**: is reduced if more children walk. Air quality and particulate matter are especially relevant in our cities.
- Attendance and punctuality**: Some walk to school schemes can lead to improved attendance and punctuality which leads to improved learning.
- Happy neighbours**: The more children who walk, the fewer cars there will be blocking neighbours' drives and causing frustration.
- Start young**: Regular walking from a young age means children grow up with this good healthy habit for life.

Appendix Two

1. Footpath from the A28 next to the Pig & Whistle via Lakeside. It arrives some 200meters or so from the upgraded section of Mock Lane outside the primary school. As a result, folk are using the daisy path - off to the left (photo taken in summer hols.) - which arrives in the lane closer to the school.



2. The point where the 'short cut' emerges on to the lane via a dangerous construction area dump.



3. View down towards the footpath exit which is under the large tree on the right. Bollards placed down to the distant triangle - to help pedestrians along the narrow lane. N.B. 30 mph sign. Vehicles coming the other way are in a 60mph zone.



4&5. Footpath from Chilmington Hamlet which joins an unfinished road and pavement some 300 meters from Mock Lane. Walkers have to weave their way past all these obstructions and tend to use the otherwise unused road surface (left).





6. Mock Lane (unrestricted speed limit) going over the hill to Singleton. Nowhere to walk.

