

## **Appendix A1 – Email responses to the proposal to expand Cheswick Green Primary School.**

1. I am a resident of Cheswick Green and I live on Cheswick Way extremely near to the school. I also have 2 young children who attend the school. I would like to express my concerns about the expansion of the village school.

Firstly, parking and congestion is a major concern which impacts local residents and also the safety of children. The situation is already problematic, so doubling the numbers is going to cause major issues and cannot be doable.

Secondly Cheswick Green is a village with community values and the children who attend the school are part of the community. They are young primary aged children who grow up with children within the village who they also attend school with, as so form long lasting friendships. Surely children from other areas would benefit from having a school in their area for the same reasons. I appreciate larger schools benefit from better funding, but smaller schools benefit from children being more valued as individuals, which in my opinion is worth much more.

To conclude I think building a separate school is the best option.

Thank you for taking time to read my concerns.

2. I believe that the correspondence I should have received is a neighbour notification?

I now understand from another interested party that the tarmac access road is for deliveries to the caretaker's storeroom. Can I please question why there would be a dropped curb at the end of this access road? I would also like to seek assurance that this road would not be used by contractors during the proposed building work?

Thank you in advance

3. Whilst I can see the reason for expansion, I feel that the increase of staff is going to cause a local problem. At the moment staff park outside of the school in Cheswick way and if the proposal goes ahead we will have a bigger problem. Can it be ensured in the planning that sufficient parking is provided on site even if it means acquiring land to the north east for access and parking.

4. We have lived three doors from Cheswick Green school gates for 33 years. In all that time I have witnessed many near accidents and have had numerous arguments with parents over parking. When the school is operating normally it is not uncommon to have vehicles encroaching both sides of our drive and with cars parked opposite it is impossible to egress safely if at all. We are horrified by the prospect of having double the number of pupils as this would obviously mean double the number of parents trying to park. The staff do not have enough on-site parking, as the top end of Cheswick Way, where we live, always has cars parked all day during term times. Double the number of pupils would also mean more staff which would equal more congestion. We emailed our local councillor a long time ago asking to investigate the possibility of one side parking on Cheswick Way at certain times to help both residents and for safety (no reply received). When the council

gave permission for these 750 new homes what consideration was given to both schooling and doctors surgery or is this an afterthought? Would it not be better, not least for the environment, to build a new school or even an annex to Cheswick School at Blythe Valley.

5. I live two doors away from Cheswick Green School entrance gates. Over the last 36 years living here, I have witnessed Several near accidents Parents arguing about parking spaces Cars parked across my drive Buses barely able to get through because of double parking Ambulance had to park in the middle of the road Cars parked on the bends of Creynolds Lane and Cheswick Way junction Cars parked by the bus stop making it very difficult for the bus driver If I need to exit my drive, because of the double parking , I have great difficulty. All these comments happen between the hours of 8.30am to approximately 9.15am and 2.45pm to 3.40pm. Teachers park constantly on Cheswick Way during school hours because of no space left on the school premises I feel that doubling school pupils will equal more teachers , hence more congestion I thought that when permission was given for a new development of 750 houses, a new school and surgery was required

6. Yesterday I sent an email with my response to the ongoing proposal. Today was a classic example of what I was trying to portray. Please see attached photos. One of the photos is showing the road outside my house at 10 o'clock, all the cars belong to the school. The other photo shows where parents think it is ok to park when the road is full...right across my drive. I have no idea who owns this car but in the past I have waited for the drivers to return and confronted them. I have either received abuse or "I was late"! Now I do not bother and there is the possibility of the problem being doubled!!!

7. Good evening, Please could my following concerns be considered in when deliberating the proposed expansion to Cheswick Green School:

### **Why?**

- The proposed expansion to CG school is to cater for the needs of children living in Blythe Valley. Why, then, not build a school at Blythe Valley?

### **Traffic and parking**

- I walk to school with my child, many, I suspect the majority, of the children live locally and walk to school. However too many parents and visitors to the school park in Cheswick Way and nearby roads, often inconsiderately, and cause a lot of traffic congestion. The school frequently have to remind parents of safe parking etiquette following incidents.
- These factors lead to the re-routing of the A7/A8 bus service away from Cheswick Way, so reducing bus travel choice for many residents.
- There is no direct access between Blythe Valley and the school. The only routes are either via Illshaw Heath village and Illshaw Heath Road, or via Stratford Road and Creynolds Lane.
- Neither route is suitable for children to walk or cycle in safety. Stratford Road is often very congested, and the alternative country lanes via Illshaw Heath are hardly suitable to carry more traffic.

- So there is no practical alternative for the children from Blythe Valley to travel, other than by car.
- If the school is going to be twice the size, it will need twice the number of pupils. As all the additional pupils will need to be brought by car, we could expect a threefold, fourfold, or greater increase in traffic and parking around the school.
- This significant increase in vehicular activity close to the school would be a very great safety risk to the children, and further annoy and inconvenience local residents.
- It would inevitably increase both air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, totally at odds with all ideas of a more sustainable future for our children.

### **Building and development**

- I have a good opinion of Cheswick Green School, and would be opposed to any building works or associated activity being carried out during term-time, which will be disruptive to my child's education.
- Any new building would significantly reduce the space for play, games and recreation on the site. This none too large as it is. Reducing this space, whilst doubling the number of pupils, is a non-starter as far as I am concerned.
- Also I would be totally opposed to any attempts to 'solve' some or all of the above mentioned problems by building or extending on to the adjacent land to the north-east of the school. This is open, farmed, Green Belt land which fulfils an essential role in maintaining Cheswick Green as a place that is separate from the West Midlands conurbation. The gap between buildings is at its narrowest here.
- Any encroachment would be contradictory to the fundamental role of the Green Belt in preventing the coalescence of settlements.

### **Conclusion**

- Whilst the idea of expanding a school seems benign, in this instance it will do harm to children, the environment, and the local community.
- Any attempt to mitigate the symptoms by extending on to adjoining land would cause even greater harm.
- Cheswick Green is the wrong place to build a school for the children of Blythe Valley. Cheswick Green School should be for the children of Cheswick Green or Cheswick Place.
- Schools, particularly primary schools where children are accompanied each way, must be built close to where the children live.
- To do otherwise would be to ignore all we have learned from the impacts of development on our health, our society and our planet over the last century. How would that message be taught to our children?
- The children of Blythe Valley deserve their own school where they can enjoy safely walking to school in the fresh air, the same way that my child does.
- I would like to comment on the proposal to expand Cheswick Green Primary School

8. My objections to the proposals are as follows:-

As a long standing local resident who lives in close vicinity to the school, I have seen the difficulties both morning and afternoon whilst children are being dropped off or

collected by their parents etc. The volume of traffic is too much for the limited roadway space to accommodate the vehicles causing, residents drives to be blocked and the bus unable to negotiate through. This problem has increased recently as the teachers vehicles are now parked on the roadway all day as the limited parking in the school has been closed off. The new plans only show 15 spaces for staff parking, this will not cover enough spaces for current staff, let alone increasing the amount of staff need for double the number of children. The hall is only suitable for the current numbers of children and will not accommodate double the number, as no increase in the size of hall is shown in the plans. The bus service has been hard fought for and was increasingly being used before the Covid lockdown, if the bus cannot get through this service will be lost. A local bus needs to travel through the estate to collect people, particularly the elderly; Creynolds Lane is too far for many to walk to for the bus stop. The field behind the school currently leased to the farmer is owned by Solihull Council, why cannot a large parking area and turning circle be created on that land next to the school field and boundary? No parent would let an infant or junior school age child walk from Blythe Valley housing development on their own and working parents have no time to walk to school return home before commencing their days work so traffic will never diminish, only increase. The roadway parking at St Patricks school is even worse so not an easy alternative option. The plans are not detailed enough for me to comment further on the actual building but unless the traffic problems are resolved first I think redevelopment of the school should be held in abeyance. The obvious answer is a separate school being built at Blythe valley, using the developers Section 106 agreements. This small area is being overdeveloped by housing and yet more housing without consideration for the infrastructure required.

9. I propose a path way with a suitable pavement and lighting running between Cheswick Green and Blythe Valley to encourage Blythe Valley Residents to walk to School with their children, help reduce traffic in the area at peak times, encourage fitness, protect the environment and build a link between the two communities. As a Blythe Valley resident and an expecting parent, I know this would be a great addition to the community and would encourage me to walk to school and the Cheswick Green shops rather than driving. Has this / is this being considered? In comparison to other options it could be a relatively cheap idea providing great benefits to the wider areas.

10. I feel very strongly that this proposal to increase the size of the Cheswick Green School, and the resulting affect to the local community surrounding the school is totally unacceptable.

### **Objections to Cheswick Green School being increased in size to cater for 420 pupils from 240 (255)**

#### **Please provide any comments on the proposal that you would like us to consider.**

I wish to lodge my objection to the proposed expansion of Cheswick Green School. For some considerable time now, the local surrounding area around the school entrance in Cheswick Way has had to put up with unacceptable levels of parking (both correctly and anti-social ie parking across peoples drives) along Cheswick Way

,Foxland Close, Badger Close and even Saxonwood Road, at the start time of school, to some degree lunchtime and finally school pupil closing time, from parents wishing to drop off and pick up their children, and also members of staff who also park their cars along Cheswick Way rather than use the car park inside the school boundary. To increase the size of the school, certainly by the numbers suggested will only make matters much worse than they already are at the moment.

### **Are there any alternative proposals that you think should be considered?**

Instead of inundating one area of the community with this ridiculous increase to an already, too much inflated school populous, you should consider using the land you are building on at Blythe Valley to include its own schooling and try to prevent the increase in levels of traffic that is absolutely bound to be created by parents driving their children from Blythe Valley to Cheswick Green for schooling.

### **Please provide any other information that you think should be considered.**

Blythe Valley construction site which I understand is a brown field site and has plenty of room for construction of a 2 form entry school, as does Hockley Heath, should certainly be considered before Cheswick Green School. It is grossly unfair what you are proposing to do, on the local residents of Cheswick Green in the proximity of the said school.

## **11. SMBC - PROPOSAL TO ENLARGE CHESWICK GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Is Doubling It's Size The Best Decision ? -NO!

I have been a resident of Cheswick Green (previously Shirley ) for nearly 40 years. I have always taken a keen interest in local issues particularly those resulting from decisions made by SMBC. As an experienced Senior Teacher (now retired ) I have witnessed on several occasions the full impact on local communities that such decisions can have.

I am deeply disturbed by the news that the Council is to consider doubling the size of the local Primary School. There are a number of significant reasons why I believe this would impact adversely on the local area.

**TRAFFIC** - At peak times (both am and pm ) the roads close to the school become impossibly congested. Prior to 'Lockdown' it was not uncommon for queues in excess of 1000 metres to develop along Creynolds Lane –very many there following the school drop-off. In recent years any intended manoeuvre into or out of a drive is potentially dangerous. This would be exacerbated should potentially 100+ more cars visit the school.

**RESIDENTS** - During the periods of 'Lockdown' I have regularly walked past the entrance to the school. The traffic situation in the morning and afternoon is chaotic. The scenes I have witnessed on occasions have been unbelievable. Nearby residents have to tolerate totally unacceptable behaviour from a significant number of inconsiderate drivers / parents. Yellow lines and disabled parking bays are simply ignored and the resulting congestion in the single route through that part of Cheswick Way must infuriate other drivers. This has been a well –documented problem for many years. How do staff feel about having to leave their cars on a public road?

**ENTRANCE' IN CREYNOLDS LANE?** - Creynolds Lane was I suspect originally intended to serve a local rural environment Not surprisingly it is narrow in places and has 'bottle necks' –one of which is at the entrance to Cheswick Way. Any proposal to

create a new school entrance on the lane close to that junction would simply spread the problem over a greater distance -not solve it.

**BIGGER PICTURE** - I acknowledge that Cheswick Green/ Dickens Heath might need additional school places due to the Council's decision to consider building nearly 40 percent of its intended new home development in the immediate area. This is in itself a gross error which if implemented will compound the major traffic issues that already exist.

**ALTERNATIVES** - Surely the more appropriate and sensible solution would be if the Council were to thoroughly investigate the possibility of building a new two form entry school closer to where the new housing might be located ( providing the Local Plan is accepted ) -say off Dog Kennel Lane. There seems no sense at all in making a bad situation even worse.

**CONSULTATION** - As yet I fail to fully understand why the Governing Body are 'in principal' not opposed to this idea. I would certainly want to ask if this is the view of all staff –have they been consulted and their opinions taken into account? Neither am I aware whether there has been any consultation with local residents. What I have discovered on my recent walks when chatting to many of them is that the move is not universally popular. What evidence can the Council provide that confirms whether alternative solutions have been fully investigated?

**LOCAL COUNCILLORS** - I should like to hear the views of the locally elected individuals –to my knowledge there has been no reference to what they have to say in support of the local community.

**IN CONCLUSION** - 'Investment in the Future' should be the principal on which the decision must be made –not simply one that appears to just provide a 'quick and convenient' way for the Council to appear to satisfy it's obligations whilst the community is distracted by 'matters' of national importance. As a local resident already suffering significantly due to the exponential increase in the volume ( and speed ) of traffic in the immediate vicinity of the school I ask that this proposal is not only rejected without further consideration but also that more thorough research into other alternative and more suitable options is undertaken

12. I am in favour of the school expanding but I would like you to consider the following points at present approx. 220 pupils attend this school This causes problems with residential homes in the immediate area with teachers parking all day along with Parents, This causing problems for local Buses unable to collect customers from bus stops, another 220 pupils

- Double yellow lines both sides if road.
- No parking on one side only
- No parking on both side from Creynolds Lane to Foxland close.
- Speed and or Parking cameras
- Crossing control at school
- Stopping public parking outside property drives
- Stopping parking at Bus stop
- Stopping traffic parking on road junction Creynolds lane
- No parking During School Hrs 1HR before and after

13. I object to the SMBC plan to expand Cheswick Green Primary School.

My objections are concerned with travel to and from Cheswick Green school from Blythe Valley.

My objections are:

- SMBC cannot expect any parent or child to walk to Cheswick Green school from Blythe Valley as the roads are narrow lanes with no footpaths.
- The local roads in Cheswick Green will not cope with the doubling of school traffic around the school.
- The local roads in Cheswick Green will not cope with the doubling of Parking around the school.
- The route that parents and children would need to drive from Blythe Valley to Cheswick Green is inadequate for the traffic; they are narrow country lanes.
- If parents (with their children) avoid the country lanes they will need to drive along the Stratford Rad and Creynolds Lane which are already busy at peak times.

In addition, if a new school is being built with plot BL2 of the Local Plan with 1,000 homes, surely a school should be built with the Blythe Valley development.

14. Regarding the upcoming plans for additional housing in the Cheswick Green /Dog Kennel Lane area I don't doubt there are a lot of people who would like to live in this area but having seen the services that have been put in to accommodate Blythe Valley I do feel the Council should think again before agreeing to this proposal in it's current state. Schooling is inadequate there should have been a facility alongside the housing in the Blythe Valley area before now, I do not think young children should have to come so far to school especially if on foot and as there seems to be no other form of transport currently provided other than car (for which parking is totally inadequate) maybe this should have been addressed from the start. Also Cheswick school whether doubled or not will not accommodate play, parking or any other space for the additional children. Please do not let these plans go ahead until much more research is done and practical measures are sought not just for the children but also for the elderly in the area of which I am one.

15. I am responding as: A resident of Cheswick Green, A part time carer - I look after my grandchild 3 days a week, including taking to Cheswick Green Primary School and back, A past parent - both my children attend Cheswick Green Primary School for the whole of their primary education, A former governor - I was a governor at the school for over 12 years.

Whilst, superficially, the idea of extending a good school like Cheswick Green is attractive, a closer examination of the proposal suggests that it would cause harm to the children and residents of Cheswick Green, increase the demand for travel, and be counter to carbon reduction initiatives.

It is clearly feasible to increase the capacity of buildings at Cheswick Green, but just because something is possible does not make it, the right or best solution. I feel that alternative ideas have been dismissed too lightly.

In summary, I am very concerned that CGPS is not the best place for the educational needs of Blythe Valley children to be met, and the proposal would be harmful to Cheswick Green residents, and be contrary to carbon reduction intentions.. My particular concerns are:

Why build it at Cheswick Green? The right place for a school to serve the children of Blythe Valley is at Blythe Valley. It would minimise their need to travel, and they would be able to walk to school easily, safely, quickly, and with minimal carbon emission. We have to presume that a school will serve its community for generations; for 60 or 100 years or more. Current government fads are not an excuse for doing the wrong thing, particularly with such with long term negative consequences for so many children. School building is to serve future generations.

Proposed new building - The proposal appears to be the bare minimum necessary to accommodate the requisite number of additional classrooms. However, whilst I couldn't endorse an over elaborate vanity project, this does seem unduly penny-pinching. There is no, or minimal, increase in the size of the school hall, staff facilities, rooms for music, library etc., and a reduction in the total provision of breakout space, despite a doubling of classrooms, teachers and pupils. It seems set to make Cheswick Green a less comfortable environment for both teaching and learning, to the disadvantage of all. The size of the playing field will be reduced, and the hard outdoor play area will not increase. The plans show no increased parking provision - see below.

Harm to Cheswick Green - In the past I have walked with my children to Cheswick Green School, as I do now with my grandchild, each way, three days a week. From my observations it seems that the majority of children now in the school arrive on foot. However, a significant minority are brought by car, resulting in a lot of parking on Cheswick Way and over-spilling into adjoining roads. It can be readily seen that cars are often parked carelessly and inconsiderately. They can obstruct driveways and pedestrian crossing points, and cause congestion in Cheswick Way which often affects traffic turning from Creynolds Lane. It also, despite the school markings, obstructs visibility for pedestrians attempting to cross the road near the school. However, it is not all down to parent parking. A significant number of cars are now parked on this part of Cheswick Way during the school day in term time, apparently associated with the school. The present degree of local congestion and obstruction has caused the operators of the A7/A8 buses to withdraw the service entirely from Cheswick Way, which has severely reduced public transport accessibility for many residents of Cheswick Green - at a time when it is part of the Council's policy to promote alternatives to the private car. This is entirely due to the presence of Cheswick Green School, its inability to provide parking spaces for many of the people who work or visit there, and to the behaviour of a minority of parents. With a doubling of school capacity, almost all the additional spaces would be taken by pupils not living within a safe walking distance. These pupils would be conveyed to and from school by car. The parent parking problem would increase in direct proportion to the increase in children living further away. This could be a threefold, fourfold or greater increase - I don't know, but you have the figures. Again the problem would be compounded by the increase in teaching and non-teaching staff. The published proposals include no provision for additional on-site parking. More traffic in the vicinity of the school entrance increases the safety risk to children,



particularly to those crossing Cheswick Way at this point. The problems arise in part, because there is no safe pedestrian route between Blythe Valley and Cheswick Green School. Realistically, there is no alternative to the car for this journey. The route via Stratford Road is often busy and congested, whilst the alternative, via Illshaw Heath, is mainly on narrow, unlit, country lanes. Neither is where we want to encourage more traffic.

Other Observations - It has been mooted that some of the above traffic and parking problems could be resolved by the provision of a new road access and parking area to the northeast of the school, served from Creynolds Lane. This would transfer, rather than resolve, most of the problems. A new road access to Creynolds Lane would itself create a risk. If pedestrian access to the school remained from Cheswick Way, many parents would still prefer to drop off their children there. If this pedestrian access were to be closed, it would add about 300 metres to the walk to school for most pupils, a move which, in itself, would tend to encourage greater car use. It would also involve building in the green belt at a point where the open gap between developments is little over 200m wide. Many residents would see this as a threat. This idea would be costly, ineffective, and most unwelcome. Some parties have suggested that transferring school parent parking to the village hall/pub car park would solve the problem. This is an unrealistic and daft idea that deserves no further consideration. If a new school is to be built on land off Dog Kennel Lane as proposed in the Local Plan, (I, personally, am against this allocation) it would be little further by car from Blythe Valley than would Cheswick Green. It would be much better located for safe and sustainable access to new and existing development in the area than would Cheswick Green. As a new school in a new development, community interface issues could be resolved by good design and layout in the first instance, and past mistakes not repeated.

In Conclusion - Building school capacity at Cheswick Green to for the children of Blythe Valley is inappropriate. There is no safe walking or cycling route available. Children would be conveyed to and from school only by car. It would result in very much more traffic attempting access the school, with a consequent increase in congestion, and in accident risk. The proposal is contrary to those carbon reduction policies which seek to reduce the need to travel and to minimise car use. Present parking problems would be very greatly increased, much to the detriment of local residents. The proposed development itself would appear to reduce the space per person within the school, and in its grounds. It is unlikely that any expansion of school premises on this site could resolve all the above matters.

This proposal will cause severe problems, but offers no solutions. Don't rely on goodwill towards education (we all want our children and grandchildren to have a good education) to allow you to ride roughshod over all other considerations.

16. As a long time resident of Cheswick Green and one who will be affected more than most, I am writing to express my concern and dismay at the proposed expansion of Cheswick Green primary school. Our property in Longleat Drive, immediately adjacent to The Mount, has suffered from noise, privacy and antisocial pupil behaviour for a number of years, with each development bringing activity closer to our shared boundary. In good weather it is already impossible to enjoy our garden due to intolerable noise levels whilst, despite all our efforts to provide screening by

way of vegetation and enhanced fencing, we suffer from serious privacy issues twice a day with parents escorting children into the rear entrance. This is particularly problematic during winter months due to lack of vegetation. The proposed additional classroom to the rear of the building will now mean that we shall be directly overlooked throughout the day. Noise pollution is a constant issue because the foundation stage outdoor activity area is immediately opposite our property. We consider that the proposed increase in pupil numbers can only exacerbate these issues further.

Moving on to more generic neighbourhood issues, there are various aspects of the proposal that I would like to comment upon:-

**Need for additional school places** - The information sheet sent to residents indicates that the school is currently operating at full capacity of 210 pupils, excluding early years. There is continued generic growth in the catchment area due to the Mount Dairy Farm development and additionally, with an ageing population, the churn of property ownership will inevitably bring younger families into the area. I therefore find the comment that current applications for places are being accommodated within existing school capacity unconvincing. It seems to me strangely coincidental that the development at Blythe Valley will produce an additional pupil requirement of (how convenient) 210 places, meaning that an exact doubling of the school will solve the problem perfectly. The local development plan indicates that the proposals at Dog Kennel Lane and Majors Green of 1350 houses justifies the provision of a new primary school of two form intake. Why is it that the 750 houses planned for Blythe Valley do not justify a new school of one form intake? A new development onsite could be future proofed for expansion over time, whilst leaving the Cheswick Green site the capacity for its own expansion should local growth justify it?

**Proposed building expansion** - Having studied the proposed expansion plans in some detail, they seem to me to be inadequately thought through. Aside from a doubling of classroom capacity, there seems little in the way of accommodation of peripheral activities. A doubling of pupil numbers seem to require a similar need for additional music, IT and library capacity which would seem to be absent from the plan under consideration. Can the existing staff room suitably absorb the necessary extra staff, to say nothing of assembly and dining facilities, which would appear to be being catered for in an outdoor area? Fine for a Mediterranean climate! Additional car parking for the extra staff seems also conspicuous by its absence, unless they will be expected to add further to the congestion outside by having to park on public roads.

**Traffic and parking around the school site** - The only sensible conclusion to the proposed traffic and highways appraisal would be to reject the development out of hand. The stretch of Cheswick Way past the school is already a 'no go area' for residents twice a day as existing parents seem incapable of finding an alternative to driving to school and parking as close as possible without any concern whatsoever for local residents. Suggestions concerning the provision of footpaths or safe cycle routes, even school buses from Blythe Valley are frankly, laughable. If existing parents within a few minutes walk feel the need to commute by car, is it really likely that further flung families will 'do the right thing?' Suggestions regarding provision of

car parking away from the school would still require what most parents will see as an unacceptable walk, and an alternative possibility of a no parking area in Cheswick Way would only result in the adjacent residential roads being unacceptably flooded with parent parking.

**Environmental Issues** - The local development plan makes much of the Council's intention to reduce its environmental impact over the coming years, with an aspiration to significantly reduce reliance on individual vehicle use. The necessity to transport 210 pupils from Blythe Valley to Cheswick Green flies directly in the face of this policy. Once up to speed, I can foresee at least 100 additional return journeys, twice a day into what is already becoming a village swamped with through traffic from the ever increasing developments in surrounding areas. The proposed school expansion is thus in direct contravention of the Authority's stated green policies. I know that these views will be mirrored by a large number of my fellow residents and I trust that you will take very seriously the level of concern that the local community clearly has for a project which will undoubtedly have long term implications for the quality of life for all of us.

17. I would like to express my very strong concern that the proposal to double school places at Cheswick Green Primary School would have a massive impact on the road network, especially on Cheswick Way which is already extremely congested at school drop off/pick up times.

Doubling the number of children arriving and departing from the school, the majority of which would undoubtedly be by car, as there are very poor public transport links and there is no safe walking route from Blythe Valley to the school, would be chaotic. Not only would this bring traffic congestion, it would also increase air pollution on Cheswick Way and the surrounding roads.

The report presented to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills states that the expansion is to cater for the additional housing development at Mount Dairy Farm (which is now Cheswick Place) and Blythe Valley, both of which have very high levels of car ownership. Blythe Valley is several miles away and not connected to Cheswick Green by a regular and reliable bus service, nor is it practical or sensible to expect children to walk to and from school from there. There is actually no bus service that runs from Blythe Valley to the school site in Cheswick Way, as the hourly A7/A8 services run directly down Creynolds Lane and miss out the school altogether. This is because the bus operator has indicated that, because of the congestion outside the school, they would not route the bus service along Cheswick Way.

The extra vehicles will add increasing pressure to the surrounding roads. It is already very difficult to drive along Cheswick Way by the School at peak times and it would be incredibly difficult with the amount of traffic this would present.

I feel that Cheswick Green School is not a sustainable location to double in size, and I don't understand why the Council has not considered building a new one form entry Primary School at Blythe Valley itself, which would be a much more sensible and sustainable alternative.

18. I wish to respond to the consultation on the extension of Cheswick Green Primary School. It is accepted that SMBC did not make any provision for primary school education following the housing developments at both Cheswick Place and Blythe Valley. Due to these two developments Cheswick Green School will at least double in size. Most housing developments start with the planning application and after most of the plan has been built another application is made and the final development is then at least 10% larger.

The present school is already too small. Many of the present staff must park along Cheswick Way during their working time at the school. The extension plan does not include enough parking spaces for extra staff.

- There is evidence of residents of Cheswick Way becoming involved with aggressive drivers using threatening behaviour wishing to park across resident's driveways.
- Our local bus operator that runs a bus from Blythe Valley refuses to drive along Cheswick Way due to the congestion outside the school
- Some drivers delivering children to school disregard double yellow lines regularly
- Some drivers disregard the zig zag signs on the road outside the school.
- Presently traffic congestion along Cheswick Way and other roads local to the school would of course be considerably worse if this proposal goes through. It is estimated that at least 150 children will be taken to school by car and the considerable congestion would inevitably flow over into Creynolds Lane.
- The proposed plan does not show a second access/egress to the school which is vital to ease congestion on Cheswick Way.
- The Borough Council has instigated a traffic flow survey but there are two things wrong with that. Firstly, the survey was undertaken whilst the school children were entering the school in "bubbles" to combat the current pandemic rather than all children at the same time as under normal circumstances. Secondly the survey did not seem to include local roads like Foxland, Badger and Saxon Wood.
- One can hardly expect primary school children from Blythe Valley to walk to school since there is not even a pavement along the road to the school.
- Consideration has been made to build a new path across the field between Blythe Valley and Cheswick Green but that would require a bridge over the River Blythe which of course is a SSSI. Secondly the river does flood several times a year

The proposed extension of the present school does not allow for an extra 100% of children and staff.

- The staff room is too small
- The library is too small
- The hall is too small
- The music room is too small
- There is not enough outdoor space for twice as many children
- The kitchen facilities are too small

If the extension of the school goes ahead then one can only expect many of the concerns I share with many other residents to be overcome. Another possibility that should be considered to improve the situation is to build a second access to the school from Creynolds Lane. This would require a small road from Creynolds Lane across SMBC land to the rear of the school. Accessing the school from Creynolds Lane gives a perfect opportunity for the school to have more outdoor space for the children and more staff car parking. When looking at a second access the school may consider using it for junior pupils only and infants accessing from the present access on Cheswick Way.

## **Appendix A2 – Response from Cheswick Green Residents Association.**

### **PROPOSED EXPANSION TO CHESWICK GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

We are responding to the consultation in respect of the above. It is noted that the doubling of capacity is designed to accommodate children from the new Mount Dairy Farm and Blythe Valley Park housing developments.

#### **EDUCATION STANDARD**

Although the school has been awarded a “Good” rating by Ofsted, a number of parents would argue that issues remain which need improvement. Doubling the volume of pupils could easily see the education standard fall and there is nothing in the consultation that provides assurance.

Although the consultation document provides limited information, it is evident that the planned additional space and facilities are restricted and certainly not in keeping with the planned doubling of capacity. An example of this is the hall which remains the same size. Quite clearly, this is an issue and not consistent with a good learning environment.

#### **CATCHMENT AREA**

The Residents Association fully support that families from Mount Dairy Farm should be entitled to have their children educated at CGPS. However, as Blythe Valley Park is some 2.5 miles away and without footpaths, cycle lanes or easy accessed roads to Cheswick Green, it is argued that these children should not be allocated to CGPS.

#### **TRAFFIC**

A doubling of school capacity would inevitably lead to further traffic congestion in the immediate area. Not only would this be bad for children’s health, but it would also impact on safety. We have considered a rear entrance to the school, but as

this would serve to create traffic havoc on Creynolds Lane, it has been withdrawn. Due to irresponsible parking by parents and teaching staff together with the lack of proper attention, a number of minor accidents have already occurred. Suggestions on how the current congestion can be eased are given below:-

- Ban parking outside the school.
- Impose a 20mph Speed limit.
- Create a Pedestrian crossing operating at peak times.
- All teachers and support staff should park in school grounds. However, if this is not possible, then a designated parking area such as the Village Hall/Pub car park is needed.

## RECOMMENDATION

In July 2016, the Cheswick Green Residents Association surveyed local householders on many issues. The survey attracted 237 responses and their preference for primary school education is provided below:-

- Expand CGPS with a rear drop-off point 9.6%
- Build a new school on Blythe Valley Park 86.2%

Having become the dumping ground for Solihull's new housing without any major infrastructure changes, the Blythe Ward is rapidly turning into an urban jungle. The Council will continue to benefit from a significantly increased revenue and therefore logic suggests that Blythe Valley Park should have its own primary school. However, if for whatever reason this is not possible, then children should be allocated to all three local primary schools.

**CHESWICK GREEN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
7th December 2020

