

Bawdsey Parish Council

Journeys to and from school: Bawdsey CE VC Primary School

April 2024

Bawdsey Parish Council is investigating ways to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in the village. We are working with Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk District Council, and we are seeking the views and experiences of local residents.

This survey was conducted in March 2024 with parents/ carers of children attending Bawdsey CE VC Primary School. Parish council members prepared a short questionnaire which was emailed by the school to parents/ carers. Their responses were received online and compiled through SurveyMonkey. All responses were anonymous and no individual could be identified within the survey.

Summary report

This report is based on 18 responses from parents/ carers.

Ten responses (56pc) said they travelled to school from Bawdsey, with four (22pc) from Alderton and four (22 pc) from further. None of the children made the journey alone or with other children; all came with a parent/ carer.

Half the responses said that children 'sometimes' walked (50pc) to or from school, while some (11pc) 'always' walked and more (39pc) 'never' walked. Nearly half (44pc) 'sometimes' cycled, while more (56pc) 'never' cycled, and none 'always' cycled.

More than a third of the responses 'always' travelled by car (39pc). Like the numbers for walking or cycling, the largest proportion 'sometimes' (44pc) travelled by car, while fewer (17pc) 'never' did.

The survey shows that mostly children travelled by different modes on different days. The factors which influenced decisions about walking, cycling or travelling by car were said in a few responses to be the distance or time and the weather.

The main factors in parents'/ carers' decisions about how to travel to and from school were **safety in relation to the traffic** and the **state of the footpaths**:

- "Fast traffic and no pavements"
- "Fast roads, dark in winter."
- "[D]riving (too fast round corners)."
- "Too young to cycle and walking a bit dangerous on 60 mph bends with no pavement."
- "Speed of road users and weather is a factor as to why we do not bike more often."
- "Tractors at pick up / drop off."
- "Speed of traffic through East Lane. People parking on the path."

The walk **to and from Alderton** along the main road was said to be dangerous:

- "The parts where I have to walk the children in the main road as no paths or paths that are too overgrown to walk. Super dangerous walking into Bawdsey from Alderton as no connecting path and lots of traffic."

- “There is no connecting path from Alderton to Bawdsey, most of it you have to walk on main road with small children and buggy, and paths that are there you can’t use due to verges overgrown, hedges overgrown or too much mud and sand.”
- “The path from Alderton to Bawdsey runs out and it is not safe to walk as motorists drive over 30 mph and so do tractors.”
- “I walk on main road while son walks on path. ...[P]aths overgrown too much to fit buggy on. Also we have to all walk on road entering Bawdsey as no paths only one for new houses... [M]ain road ... is so dangerous as lots of traffic, farm traffic and delivery drivers that are very fast.”

The **lack of footpaths in the roads near the school** was a main concern, particularly by the old vicarage past the church and the East Lane junction with the main road junction; by the park; the corner of Long Lane and the main road. And:

- “We don’t enjoy having to walk past the huge puddle in East Lane as so many cars speed through it soaking us all. Not an ideal situation when my children have to go into school soaking wet!”
- “[I]f cycling we go via the quiet lane. If walking a pavement up East Lane past the park would be very helpful. Also a pavement from the school to the park should be considered.”

Walking their child to and from school could also involve a toddler, pram or buggy, a scooter and/ or a dog. For some there was no option other than walking, for instance:

- “I only walk out of necessity because it’s a long walk and my child doesn’t have the strength to walk without being carried.”

Parents/ carers said they would **walk or cycle more** if it was safer:

- “Would like to cycle more. Speeding, impatient drivers and almost being knocked over by a tractor have prevented us doing this more.”
- “[T]here really should be more done to encourage people to walk or cycle. I will definitely be coming by bicycle once I get a new one. I see some people coming from two minutes up the road by car and it pollutes the area and makes it difficult to park on the premises.”
- “I enjoy being outside in nature, and the exercise. I don’t enjoy the lack of pavement in some areas, pot holes and often the roads become flooded.”
- “We live in Bawdsey and would love to walk to school more. A pavement to the school would massively increase how attractive it is to walk.”
- “Cycling is enjoyable and relaxed until we meet traffic as past experience causes anxiety.”

And the journey was enjoyed:

- “When you get to a straighter part of the road where you can see the traffic and when there is a proper footpath.”

Report by Sue Tappenden, parish councillor, and Mike Locke, parish councillor and school governor. The parish council would welcome feedback:

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