

### **3-minute statement 02/05/24 Talia Kelly**

#### The concern:

Following an increase in traffic, congestion, poor parking, growing confrontational situations between residents and parents, and a number of near misses/incidents outside Freshford Primary School during school pick up and drop off times, the school and governing body initiated surveys and multi-agency group meetings to identify problems, address issues and establish a vision for safer streets in the vicinity of the school during school run times.

#### The impact, context and background giving rise to the concern:

Despite ongoing work to influence and nudge families to embrace active travel options and operate park and stride initiatives with local businesses, the 'mode shift' in behaviour has been slow at best.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2024, Freshford School hosted a 'Playing Out' event as an experimental endeavour to address residents' concerns, particularly regarding traffic congestion, and give children a chance to see what safe streets look like. This also helped initiate robust dialogue about traffic issues the village faces and possible solutions amongst a variety of stakeholders. The event was a success and a post-mortem survey illustrated that, in the main, respondents felt the Playing Out initiative helped to address traffic and travel concerns outside the school, noting how the children could play and move around much more safely.

Survey participants were particularly interested in exploring future walking bus/park and stride options and would like to see similar events in the future.

#### Action requested of the Council:

- Formalising walking buses is currently costly and difficult to administer from within cash-strapped, resource-limited schools. Financial support (e.g. for insurance purposes) and less red tape would ensure the viability, longevity and success of these endeavours.
- Reclassifying roads to lower categories where possible would provide safer walking routes for families by avoiding all too familiar battles with poor driving behaviours (e.g. rat running and speeding). This would enable families accessing schools from a wider catchment area to utilise active travel options more readily. For example, the recent Wales and West road closures through Lower Stoke/Crowe Hill have encouraged many Freshford School families to utilise active travel options more regularly. Sadly, many are considering returning to driving once again after the road is reopened. This would be a real step backwards.
- Providing opportunities to schools who have demonstrated real commitment to active travel/tackling poor driver behaviours to trial ETROs and school streets.