



Merrow Residents' Association
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17th March 2026

St. Thomas of Canterbury School, Merrow, Guildford “School Street” proposal

Dear Mrs. Selby,

I write on behalf of the Merrow Residents' Association to submit our formal comments on the Surrey Highways proposal to introduce a 'School Street' on the following roads around St. Thomas of Canterbury School, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey: Horseshoe Lane West, White House Drive, Greencroft, Beechway, & Holmsdale Close.

When considering our comments, it is important that you recognize that the Merrow Residents' Association (MRA) represents not only our Members in the named streets in the proposal, but also residents who may be affected by these proposals in other parts of Merrow. These comments in no way supersede or replace individual comments that may have been submitted by our members or other individuals directly to you or via the online survey that you have encouraged consultees to use.

We must state clearly that we believe the scheme, whilst well intentioned, misses many essential elements to make it workable and acceptable to all interested parties.

1] In making our comments, MRA has considered the following information:

1. The Surrey highways proposal document – reference P12831842/001096/1/2 & 2/2.
2. The Surrey County Council (SCC) School Street promotion leaflet.
3. A letter dated 5th February 2026 from Mrs. Carter, St. Thomas of Canterbury Headteacher to neighbours.
4. The SCC online School Street plans and images of signage.
5. Department of Transport & Active Travel England Guidance document “*School Streets: how to set up and manage a scheme*”. Published 19 November 2024.
6. The content of the online Zoom meeting held on 27th February 2026 between members of the MRA Executive Committee and yourself together with your colleagues Duncan Knox and Cheryl Mason.

7. Application reference 24/P/01853 The Surrey County Council Highway Authority notice recommending refusal of the planning application on the grounds that *“The proposed development would result in unacceptable highway safety impacts on the adjoining Highway, contrary to Guildford Borough Council's Local Plan (2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).”*

2] Our understanding of the scope & objectives of this School Street proposal:

The concept of a ‘School Street’ involves temporarily restricting motor vehicle access to the roads immediately surrounding the school during drop-off and pick-up times (8am-9am and 2:30pm -3:45pm). You state that this initiative aims to create a safer, cleaner, and more pleasant environment for pupils, parents, and staff.

MRA comments:

- We recognise the need for a solution to the traffic induced issues clearly identified.
- Our members in the affected roads identify a progressive worsening of the problems commencing when SCC removed denominational state school bussing in September 2012.
- The fact that the suggested restriction timings are only a suggestion/illustration is not made clear in the leaflets.
- You fail to mention that addressing the adverse impact on the residents, caused by inconsiderate behaviour and illegal dangerous parking is an important objective of the scheme.
- Some of our members object to imposition of restrictions to address problems they have not created.

3] Review of key requirements for a School Street to be effective:

We have reviewed the Department of Transport & Active Travel England Guidance document *“School Streets: how to set up and manage a scheme”*. Published 19 November 2024.

We believe that some important considerations have been missed in your proposals:

- You fail to recognise in any of the proposals the impact on travel and parking due to the school’s denominational foundation that leads to a significantly broader catchment area than other state primary schools in the area.
- Your proposal, presumably based on document reference No. 5, assumes the traffic reduction will be achieved by changing a significant amount of the car-based transport to largely public or active personal transport, and that there would be viable local parking within 5-10 minutes’ walk of the school. Where are the displaced cars going to park? You suggested that it would be on roads on the south side of the A246 (Epsom Road). Our members are of the opinion that these potential roads are already full and highly congested with little spare capacity for the displaced parking. Cars already use the double yellow lined parts of HLW to park.

We would expect some displaced cars to use the available space in Horseshoe Lane East (HLE) where double yellow lines are much more limited. The impact of this would be to restrict HLE to effectively a single track, leading to traffic conflicts. It should be noted that St. Peter’s school employs several large double decked buses for pupil drop-off and collection. These enter HLE from the south end.

If space were to be found, then even more adults and children than now would need to cross the A246 at peak times using an uncontrolled refuge island. Surely this would introduce an alternative potentially greater hazard! We take the view that this is a major impediment to the scheme and necessitates a risk assessment to be carried out and if the scheme went ahead consideration would have to be given to the installation of a pedestrian controlled crossing with lights

- You will be aware that the recent planning application to convert the former caretaker's bungalow into a pre-school nursery was rejected at a planning committee meeting of GBC on the 18th June 2025. The MRA was represented at this meeting, and heard strong support from local councillors, the Xavier Catholic Education Trust and the School. The major objection, leading to rejection of the application was the submission from SCC Highways (item reference 7 noted above).

Has SCC been asked to consider the possibility of SCC Highways removing objections to St. Thomas' opening a pre-school nursery if a School Street proposal was implemented? There is no mention of this source of additional traffic and parking need in your justification. We are aware that the School and its Educational Trust see potential financial and social advantage from provision of this additional education capability in Merrow.

4] Previous schemes and initiatives to alleviate the parking and traffic problems:

- The school provides parents and carers with recommendations and encouragement about the preferred route to take when driving to school and dropping off children. This involves entering Horseshoe Lane West (HLW) in a one-way driving direction North, peeling off left into the drop-off area, and or proceeding North past the school to park or exit the area. Signage to this effect is posted in the school, and school staff are on hand to direct traffic. Those directing the traffic are currently subjected to abuse, and these measures are ignored by many, leading to two-way traffic movement (North & South) on the single available road lane and the inevitable traffic chaos.
- MRA has been active in meetings with councillors and SCC Highways about finding potential solutions to the traffic movement safety problems since a first meeting in 2012.

Two options were proposed during these discussions. One was a timed tidal flow one-way system for HLW, and the other was placing a less formal barrier at the Southern exit from HLW on to the A246. At one stage a trial was planned, but this was subsequently dropped without any clear explanation as to the reason.

5] Other alternatives:

It is clear something has to be done. MRA has noted that the St. Thomas' traffic issues are ranked highly in SCC's priorities. MRA believes a solution must be found that considers the needs of the school, the local residents and the broader affected Merrow community.

There are no easy options. Possible options to consider would be:

- One obvious option is to use the Merrow Park & Ride and ask the parents to contribute to the cost of transport. It seems to us that if St. Peter's parents/guardians pay for bussing, then this isn't unreasonable.

However this would require that a controlled crossing be installed on Epsom Road to enable pupils to cross the road safely from the bus stops.

- Undertake a tidal flow approach trial. Provided that the permitted drop-off parking on the HLW double yellow lines is exploited, with enforcement of the double yellow line no parking restrictions where sideroads meet HLW, this would remove the traffic conflicts in HLW. However, Horseshoe Lane East (HLE) would then become more crowded with one lane restricted by parking, and lead to vehicle conflicts. The St. Peters' busses are a critical issue.

We trust that you will take account of our comments as input into your consultation process.

Yours sincerely

Keith Meldrum
Vice Chairman