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Description automatically generated**Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents’ Association**

**Question Time Evening ‘24**

**A summary of the key issues raised and the ensuing discussion**

**The panel**

Sara Marshallsay, Principal Uckfield College

Fareed Camar, Sussex Police

Cllr. Roy Galley, Chairman of East Sussex County Council

Cllr. Kelvin Williams, Wealden District Council

Cllr. Daniel Manvell, Uckfield Town Council

Manor Primary was not able to attend

**Chairman**

Paul Sparks, Chairman of Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents’ Association

**Welcome**

Sara Marshallsay welcomed everyone to the College. She went on to speak about the college and its culture which is ‘respect for all’.

The College has165 staff and 50 casual staff. 60% of the staff work part-time.

There are 1700 students on the school roll.

Paul Sparks congratulated the College on achieving an ‘Outstanding’ rating following its recent OFSTED inspection.

**The Issues raised**

**1. Parking**

Parking on and around Manor Park predominated the first half of the evening. In particular cars that are parked by teaching staff and students in the roads close to Uckfield College and Manor Primary.

Particularly hot topics were inconsiderate parking, where cars are parked obstructing driveways and the pavement at drop off and pick up times, and dangerous parking when cars are parked right on the junction of the numerous closes and service roads in Downsview Crescent.

It was clear that these matters are of great concern to nearby residents which can cause an angry reaction.

In response the College undertook to highlight these issues with students and staff.

It was noted that there are not sufficient parking spaces on the College campus to meet the demand.

Specific instances of poor parking were mentioned.

Residents can report instances online (or by phone) to Operation Crackdown.

**2. Parking enforcement**

Parking is not a priority for Sussex Police although officers will respond if the highway is seriously obstructed. The police no longer have the power to issue parking tickets.

In the rest of East Sussex parking enforcement is undertaken by wardens employed by the individual councils (this is called civil parking enforcement or de-criminalised parking). The cost of implementing civil enforcement being recovered by the introduction of car parking charges in car parks and by paid parking permit systems. The latter could mean residents also having to pay for parking outside their own homes if they fell within a parking permit zone.

In the whole country there are only about 6 areas where the police are still responsible for parking, Wealden being one of them.

In order to support the district’s High Street economy Wealden has chosen not to adopt civil parking enforcement as it wishes to keep car parking free.

Consequently, parking on yellow lines etc goes unenforced because, as mentioned previously, parking infringements are not a priority for the police in Wealden.

These problems are not confined to Uckfield and Wealden must look at the district as a whole.

If parking was de-regularised, then it would be the responsible of ESCC to implement and enforce.

These matters are being looked at by officers at Wealden.

The audience were asked what the impact would be on the town centres if parking charges were implemented, Wealden is interested in hearing people’s views.

It was suggested that a visible police presence may act as a deterrent, but this was tried in Crowborough without success.

**3. Dropped kerbs**

The poor provision of dropped kerbs across Manor Park was raised and it was noted that the Association’s Secretary, Peter Griggs was due to meet an officer from ESCC the following day to explore if the situation can be improved as mobility scooter users in particular found the absence of the proper provision of dropped kerbs greatly inhibited them when travelling around the estate or to get to the High Street etc.

**4. CCTV**

CCTV cameras in the town centre are monitored by the police although there is no longer a dedicated unit doing this 24/7. The Police HQ does have access to the Uckfield cameras and their recordings. Steps are underway to simplify how officers can access the cameras and recordings.

**5. Litter**

Dropped litter is noticeable during term time in the roads and twittens that run between the College and the Browns Lane shops. Regular litter patrols by college students were suggested but this would be a problem as these would need to be supervised by a member of college staff. If individuals can be identified, then the college will pursue it with them.

**6. Dangerous condition of the wall serving the steps at the Browns Lane shops**

The Association and the Town Council and the shop proprietors are all aware of the deteriorating condition of the wall but because its ownership is not determined no one is willing to undertake the repairs required. The estate developer went into liquidation in the 1960s before this and many other such matters were resolved.

**7. Luxford Field Car Park**

The balance between the provision of three-hour parking and ten-hour parking is under review and the audience were asked for their views. In question is whether the ten-hour provision should be reduced to allow for more three-hour spaces.

There was some discussion about this, but no firm view emerged.

**8. Traffic congestion**

The College was asked to ensure the phased release of the coaches provided for pupils. Recently several left the parking area together which caused congestion problems in Downsview Crescent, Southview Drive etc.

**9. The old youth club building**

This is now being used by the College extensively during the daytime.

It was used previously by youth workers and for mediation, this kind of support is now being delivered at the college. It was noted that the College has its own counsellors and offers a huge range of super-curricular activities.

**10. Hempstead Meadow footpath**

Wealden has obtained funding to improve the footpath to make it more sustainable and useable all year round.

The Town Council are in the early stages of talking to the owners of the land that is in private ownership with a view to extending it to Hempstead Lane.