

# **TAIN ROYAL ACADEMY**

## **TRAVEL PLAN**

**Revised December 2002**

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## **Background**

The 'new' Tain Royal Academy was opened in 1969 with a further extension in 1974 as the school roll climbed to over 800. Since the economic circumstances have changed locally and the roll has stabilised at just under 700.

The catchment area stretches from Ardgay to Nigg and includes the associated primary schools, Craighill, Edderton, Gledfield, Hill of Fearn, Hilton, Inver, Knockbreck and Tarbat Old. In addition, some pupils from Bonar Bridge and Milton transfer to TRA as a result of parental placing requests.

The school is one of four designated community schools in Highland. Facilities are shared with the community and, increasingly this happens during the school day, in clubs ranging from Third Agers to Young Parents. Work on a new all weather pitch begins in January and plans are being put in place to refurbish indoor sports facilities, including a new fitness room.

In 2002 TRA acquired 'new community school' status in recognition of the diversity of needs in the catchment area. A raft of initiatives are expected to follow in the next 3 / 4 years, not least in the area of health promotion in its widest sense.

A third additional component is the developing curricular links with St. Duthus Special School whose pupils are beginning to access the specialist facilities of the secondary school.

Tain Royal Academy is, in all senses, a fully comprehensive secondary school.

## **School Ethos**

The school's single aim is encapsulated in the statement 'The needs of the individual are at the centre of everything that we do.'

This aim applies to all, adults and children alike, who come on to TRA campus. It is intended to be all embracing and refers as much to pupil safety as it does to pupil achievement.

As stated elsewhere, most pupils have no option but to travel to and from school by bus. But all others are encouraged to travel by the most environmentally friendly method of transport possible.

The incidence of 'lifts' to and from school rises in the winter months and parents/carers are discouraged from dropping off/picking up children on Scotsburn Road. Despite our advice, examples of inconsiderate parking, particularly at the end of the school day, add to the hazard created by buses on Scotsburn Road. Where drivers are identified as parents / carers of pupils at

school, we appeal directly to them and advise them to use the school car park rather than the street. All taxi drivers comply with this request.

The Action Plan on page 9 summarises the actions taken in relation to pupil safety on roads.

### **Existing Travel Plans**

The scattered nature of the catchment area means that most pupils have no option but to travel to and from school by bus.

For pupils who live within walking distance of the school, seasonal factors affect the statistics. In the winter the number of 'lifts' to school rises and in the summer the number of cyclists roughly doubles compared to winter statistics. The following figures relate to early October 2002.

52% travel by bus

41% walk

4% travel by car

3% cycle

Of the 108 adults who work at TRA

46% travel by car

46% walk

6% cycle

2% travel by bus

### **Issues**

The key issues are summarised in the Action Plan Record on page 9.

But the main issue at the moment is the need to provide off road parking for school buses at the beginning and end of the school day.

Scotsburn Road is a busy road and one of the main routes from the by-pass to Tain town centre. Apart from providing the main access to the school, it also has a series of entrances to private houses. The entrance to the Mansfield Hotel is opposite the pedestrian access to the school. One of the main access points to the police station and ambulance station is also on Scotsburn Road.

The existing bus bay at the school will hold three buses and a minibus (double parked) with the remaining five buses parked on Scotsburn Road. The bus bay also houses the main pedestrian access/exit to the school.

Scotsburn Road curves slightly and with buses parked on the road, sight lines are lost. On a dark winter's afternoon or on a busy summer day, the combination of parked buses, moving traffic, parked cars, multiple entrances to private homes and the Mansfield Hotel, pedestrians and cyclists is felt to create all the circumstances for an accident waiting to happen.

It is the view of the School Board and the School Safety Team and the school staff that there is an urgent need to address this problem.

### **Future Plans Likely to Impact on Travel Pattern**

The rural nature of the catchment area means that there is unlikely to be any change to the number of pupils dependent on school transport for travelling to and from school.

However, the following factors are likely to increase congestion on Scotsburn Road in the next few years.

- increased community use of school facilities during the school day once a new all weather pitch is opened (May 2003) and indoor facilities are refurbished (October 2003).
- increased adult use of classroom facilities through adult learning initiatives.
- increased adult/child use of school campus through Healthy Living Centre status – co-ordinator to be in post by February 2003.

### **Background to the Current Proposal**

The congestion on Scotsburn Road at the beginning and end of the school day has been the subject of public/parental/staff comment for several years. However, the resources were not available to address the problem effectively.

Following consultations in 2000 with Highland Council's Road Safety Officer, Highland Council Roads Department and Northern Constabulary, it was agreed to draw up proposals to convert the car park at the Scotsburn Road side of the school into a bus park.

Plans were drawn up and presented to the School Board and TRA Health and Safety Committee. Both groups felt that the proposals created new problems and that the mix of buses, pedestrians and cyclists in school grounds was as dangerous as the situation pertaining on Scotsburn Road. The plans were rejected.

The School Board contacted Northern Constabulary for further advice and with a request that a traffic warden be on duty on Scotsburn Road at peak times. However, it was impossible, to guarantee that a traffic warden could be available in this location twice a day for five days a week during term time. Peak times on Scotsburn Road were also peak times in the town centre.

In 2001, the School Board put forward two further proposals:

- i) The creation of a second entrance on the Hartfield Road side of the school, the removal of a grassed area and the construction of a bus park. A pedestrian access would also be required.
- ii) The purchase of derelict buildings on Victoria Road (at the bottom of TRA playing fields), the demolition of said buildings and the creation of a new bus park area. A new pathway from Victoria Road to the Academy would also be required.

However, both options proved to be prohibitively expensive and were not considered further.

In June 2001 it was agreed that the school should prepare a Safer Routes to School Plan as suggested in the Scottish Executive Guidance on *How to Run Safer Routes to School*. The existing school Health and Safety team consisting of the Rector, representative of the three teacher unions, head janitor, centre co-ordinator and pupil representative should take on the remit of School Safety Team and draw up a plan which would be updated annually. The rector would also liaise with TRA School Board on all safety issues.

In January 2002, TRA School Board and the School Safety Team considered seven options put forward by Highland Council Roads Department.

- i) Create a dedicated long bus bay on Scotsburn Road to accommodate all the buses.
- ii) Create a loop road into the school grounds off Scotsburn Road.
- iii) Make Scotsburn Road a one way street from the entrance to Mansfield House Hotel to Quebec Avenue.
- iv) Make Scotsburn Road a one way street from Victoria Road to Quebec Avenue.
- v) Install part time signals on Scotsburn Road to regulate the flow of traffic to single working at peak times.
- vi) Create a dedicated bus stance off Scotsburn Road.
- vii) Relocate some buses from Scotsburn Road to Hartfield Road.

All seven options were fully considered by both the School Board and the SST. Option 1, although the preferred option, at £68,000 (estimate) was felt to be outwith the resources likely to be available in the near future. Similarly,

COSTING

3/12/2002

CONTRACTORY PRICE  
TO BUILD LATCH

54,000 Pat Munko

CONTRACTORY PRICE  
TO REBUILD WALL

14,000

COST TO INSTALL ZEBRA  
CROSSINGS

6,000 Roads

PUBLIC UTILITY COSTS  
FOR PLANT DIVERSION

15,000 BT  
↑ upper price.

ESTIMATED WORKS COST

89,000

CONTRIBUTION FROM A. CHIND 21,000

CONTRIBUTION FROM S. PATTERSON 32,000 TEL

OUTSTANDING BALANCE 36,000

*for Yule*

Options 2 and 6, with outline costs of £61,000 and £97,000 respectively, were felt to be unaffordable. Options 3 and 4 were expected to incur objections from the public and local residents who would be inconvenienced by a one way system. Strategy 7 was rejected on the basis that it was simply moving the problem rather than solving it. The exits on Hartfield Road would also need considerable improvement. Both groups felt that Option 7 at £16,000 was the most cost effective and this opinion was relayed to Mr Jim Stevenson, Head of Resources, Education Department, Highland Council and from there to the Roads Department.

On 19 March 2001, School Board members were informed by the Roads Department that there were legal implications associated with the erection of part-time traffic lights, particularly if they were to be controlled by the school. It was agreed that an extended bus bay should be the number one objective if funding could be identified. Mr Bill Robbins, Highland Council Roads and Transport Dept. confirmed that there was sufficient room for the provision of a long bus bay adjacent to the proposed new all weather pitch.

### **Costed Proposal**

The proposal for an extended bus bay has been costed in December 2002 by Mr Jim Yuill, Highland Council Technical Services as follows:

Contractor's price to build layby	£54,000
Contractor's price to rebuild wall	£14,000
Cost to install zebra crossing	£ 6,000
Public utility cost for plant diversion	<u>£15,000</u>
Estimated total cost	<u><b>£89,000</b></u>

### **Funding Sources**

* Contribution from Councillor Alasdair Rhind	£21,000
* Contribution from Councillor Jim Patterson	£32,000

Outstanding balance	<u><b>£36,000</b></u>
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- Both councillors have agreed to divert a substantial proportion of Scottish Executive 'windfall money' to this project. Councillor Richard Durham's windfall funding has been allocated to other priorities but this project enjoys his complete support.

**Note:-** The projected cost of £89,000 contains an element of contingency funding. In reality, a further contribution of £30,000 is likely to close the gap.

### **Benefits of Proposal**

The first and most obvious benefit is to move the buses off Scotsburn Road which will restore sight lines for all traffic moving traffic up and down the road.



The restoration of two way traffic will make it considerably safer for cyclists emerging on to Scotsburn Road. The zebra crossing will improve safety for pedestrians, particularly pupils going to the Mansfield housing estate, the pedestrian entrance to which is linked to the proposal crossing.

### **Partners in the Proposal**

Councillors Richard Durham, Jim Patterson and Alastair Rhind  
Craighill Primary School  
Highland Council Education, Culture and Sport Department  
Highland Council Technical Services Department  
MSP Jamie Stone  
Tain Royal Academy Pupil Council  
Tain Royal Academy School Board  
Tain Royal Academy School Safety Team

### **Why Now?**

Work on a new all weather pitch on the school grounds adjacent to Scotsburn Road is contracted to begin on 6 January 2003. The project will involve breaking into the existing wall. With a contractor scheduled to be 'on site' for five months, there is an opportunity to have the layby constructed at the same time.

The fact that £54,000 worth of funding is available from local councillors' 'windfall allocation' is a one-off opportunity. A £30,000 contribution from Safety Routes to School would effectively close the funding gap.

### **Alternatives**

The Background to the Current Proposal section describes in detail the steps that were taken before deciding that extending the bus bay was the only viable option. If this opportunity is missed, it may be some considerable time before Council funding can be found to carry out this much needed work. In the short term, if no action is taken, the congestion at the school gates will continue to pose a real risk of serious injury or worse, to the many pupils and adults who access or exit TRA from the Scotsburn Road side.



**KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**School Travel Plan**

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**Travel To and From School**

Pupils should be encouraged to walk to school. Parents accompanying young children should take the opportunity to teach their children how to come to school safely, highlighting issues such as-

- using the Green Cross Code
- being aware of "Stranger Danger"
- never playing with balls or toys on route to school

When entering or leaving the school grounds always close the gates and use the patrolled crossings.

If parents drive their children to school, please ensure your child exits the vehicle on the pavement side, never on the road side. Park carefully away from entrances and zigzag lines. Please do not park in staff car park.

If children are transported to school by bus, parents and teachers should reinforce the rules of-  
always sitting properly and using the seat belts  
no shouting or distracting the driver  
thank the driver on exiting the bus

Only children who have gained the Cycling Proficiency Award are allowed to cycle to school. Helmets must always be worn. Cyclists should park their bikes in the cycle racks (these are to be provided by the safer routes to school funding). **NEVER** cycle in the school playground, even after the school day.

Cycling Proficiency lessons are to be given to primary 6 and primary 7 if anyone misses them. At the end of the course, a visiting officer for the Cycling Proficiency Award tests pupils.

No child is allowed to leave the school premises during the school day without permission from their teacher. If pupils, who are normally picked up, find no parent to meet them, they must return in to the school and report to their teacher or the school secretary.

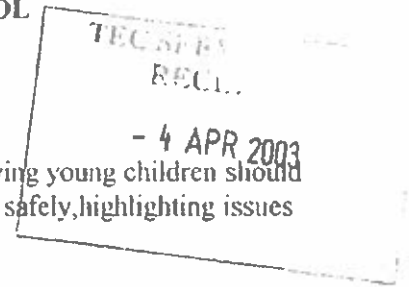
Any teacher driving a Highland Council minibus must have passed the Council's minibus test. Any classes or groups of pupils using private contractors' transport must be accompanied by a staff member.

Classes or groups of pupils visiting local places of interest on foot must be accompanied by adults on a 1-10 ratio. They should walk in twos, in an orderly fashion, on the inside of the pavement making sure they consider other walkers.

**Travel plan objectives:**

To reduce the risk of accidents and injuries.

To encourage pupils, parents and the community into making healthier, safer and more energy efficient school and other journeys. To achieve a more equitable balance between the vehicle speed culture and the safety needs of pupils.



## **KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **School Travel Plan**

To provide a safe footpath from the Fendom road end of the school, increase parking facilities within the school grounds, widen exit for emergency vehicle access and make motorists aware they are entering a school zone. Provide cycle racks for cyclists.

#### **Travel Plan Benefits:**

An improved environment and culture within the school and wider community.

Greater community consciousness of the safety needs of school pupils.

More effective safety education for our young people.

#### **Who Will Benefit:**

**PUPILS** - travel habits developed early in life are usually maintained. Walking to school, cycling, respecting public transport encourages social interaction, develops road safety and personal safety skills.

**COMMUNITY** - the fast vehicle culture is difficult to change but a raised awareness of young people's needs will help complement new measures to reduce risks.

What the project will bring to the school:

Improved health and safety for our young people from age 5-12 .

An increased awareness of road safety for all concerned reflected in more responsible and considerate behaviour of all road users.

More responsible behaviour of pupils traveling on school buses.

A greater appreciation by parents and community (including drivers) of the travel problems faced by schools in an expanding urban and rural environment.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

In the short term, if no action is taken, there will remain a high risk of a fatal accident on the Fendom Road entrance to the school.

Failure to encourage walking and cycling will continue to have a detrimental effect on our poor national health record.

#### **The school plans to:**

Work in partnership with Highland Council, Northern Constabulary and other stakeholders.  
Make a significant contribution to the attainment of Scottish Executive Targets.  
This to be achieved through the Safer Routes to School project which will itself be implemented in the personal and social development of the school.

**KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**School Travel Plan**

**Action required by parents:**

Encourage their children to behave in a safe and sensible manner at all times during their journey to and from school.

Encourage their children to follow the basic road safety rules as pedestrians, cyclists and as motorists.

Make appropriate democratic representations to public authorities in order to secure improvements.

Act as a role model and lead by example.

**Action required by others:**

Elected representatives to take account of the wishes of the local communities in these matters.

**Travel Plan Targets:**

Update the school through a newsletter of the Safer Routes to school project.

Have the necessary work started by Aug 2003 to make the Fendom road end, carparking, widening of emergency exits and cycle racks.

**Reporting Changes**

Safer Routes to school working party to meet once a term.

Minutes to be circulated to interested parties.

Annual review of the travel plan by the Safer Routes to school working party.

