

Al-Haqq Academy Travel Plan
12th September 2024

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Spiritual note of reference to support our travel plan

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever purifies himself in his house, then walks to one of the houses of Allah (the mosque) to perform an obligatory act among the acts of Allah, one step of his will wipe out his sins and another step will elevate his rank."

- (Sahih Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 1519)

Narrations such as the one above highlight the great rewards and virtues associated with walking to the mosque, such as having sins forgiven, ranks elevated, and securing a place in Paradise. They emphasize the spiritual benefits and encourage Muslims to attend congregational prayers regularly, highlighting the act of walking to the mosque as a form of worship and a means of gaining divine favour.

1. Proposal for Travel Coordinator to Address Parking Concerns

Al-Haqq Academy recognises the importance of effectively managing parking to ensure minimal disruption to the local community and adherence to council regulations. To address any potential parking concerns, we propose the employment of Travel Coordinator, who will be dedicated to alleviating parking issues during peak times and ensuring a harmonious relationship between the Mosque, local residents, and the broader community. This is our commitment to ensuring the success of our plans to be part of a cohesive and positive local community.

Role of the Travel Coordinator

The Travel Coordinator will be employed by Al-Haqq Academy, with the primary responsibility of overseeing and managing parking and traffic flow associated with the Mosque. This role is designed to provide proactive and responsive solutions, especially during peak periods, such as Friday prayers and significant religious events. They will manage a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure that attendance to the Mosque via car does not cause any neighbours or local residents harm or bother.

Key responsibilities include:

i. Monitoring and Managing Peak Time Parking:

- Friday Prayers and Special Events: The coordinator will actively manage parking during high-traffic times with a team of volunteers by directing attendees to designated parking areas and ensuring smooth traffic flow.
- Coordination with Local Authorities: The coordinator will liaise with local traffic enforcement and council representatives to ensure compliance with parking regulations and to adjust strategies as needed.

ii. Promoting Alternative Transportation:

- Encouraging Public Transport Use: The coordinator will promote the use of public transportation among mosque attendees, including providing information on local bus and train schedules.
- Carpooling Initiatives: The Mosque will encourage carpooling through community outreach, reducing the number of vehicles requiring parking.

iii. Designating Suitable Parking Areas:

- On-Site Parking Management: The coordinator will manage expectations and direct traffic away from the local residential area to the nearby public car parks as necessary.

- **Use of Nearby Public Parking:** The coordinator will identify nearby public parking facilities that can be used during peak times and coordinate with attendees to utilise these areas, reducing the strain on local street parking.

iv. Supporting the Local Community:

- **Resident Communication:** The coordinator will engage with local residents to address any concerns regarding parking or traffic. This includes providing clear communication about event times and parking arrangements.
- **Mitigation Measures:** The coordinator will implement mitigation measures to reduce any negative impact on the local community, such as temporary parking restrictions or traffic redirection strategies.

v. Ongoing Assessment and Reporting:

- **Regular Reviews:** The coordinator will regularly assess the effectiveness of the parking management plan, making adjustments as necessary based on feedback from the community and council.
- **Reporting to Council:** The Mosque will provide periodic reports to the council detailing the coordinator's activities and the outcomes of implemented strategies.

Benefits to the Community

By employing a dedicated Travel Coordinator, Al-Haqq Academy aims to proactively manage parking and traffic concerns, ensuring that the Mosque's activities do not negatively impact the local area. This approach will help to:

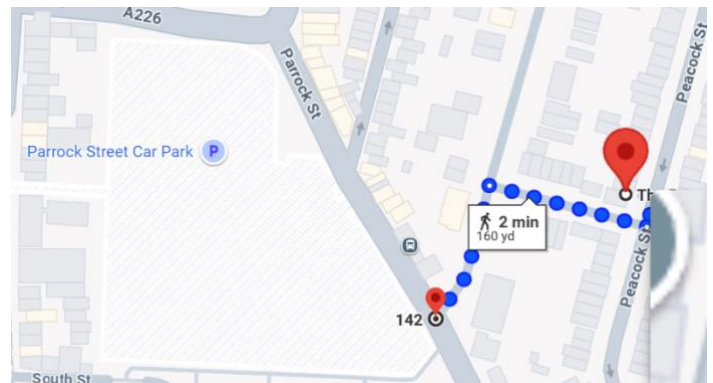
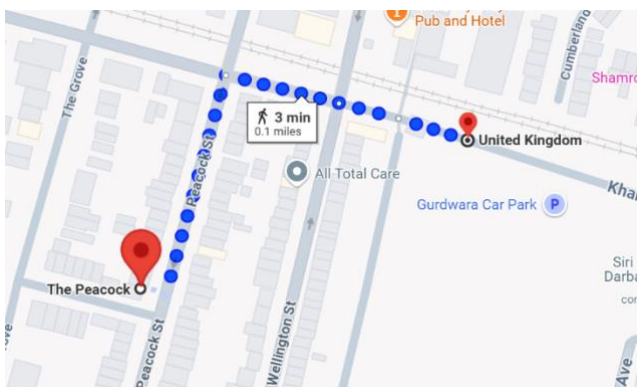
- **Reduce Congestion:** By effectively managing parking and promoting alternative transport options, we will reduce traffic congestion during peak times.
- **Enhance Community Relations:** Open communication and ongoing engagement with residents will foster positive relationships and ensure that the Mosque remains a good neighbour.
- **Ensure Compliance:** The coordinator will ensure that all parking and traffic arrangements comply with local regulations, preventing any issues with enforcement.

We believe that this proactive approach will not only address the council's concerns but also enhance the overall experience for Mosque attendees and the surrounding community. This proposal outlines the specific role and responsibilities of the Travel Coordinator and emphasises the Mosque's commitment to supporting the local community and adhering to council regulations.

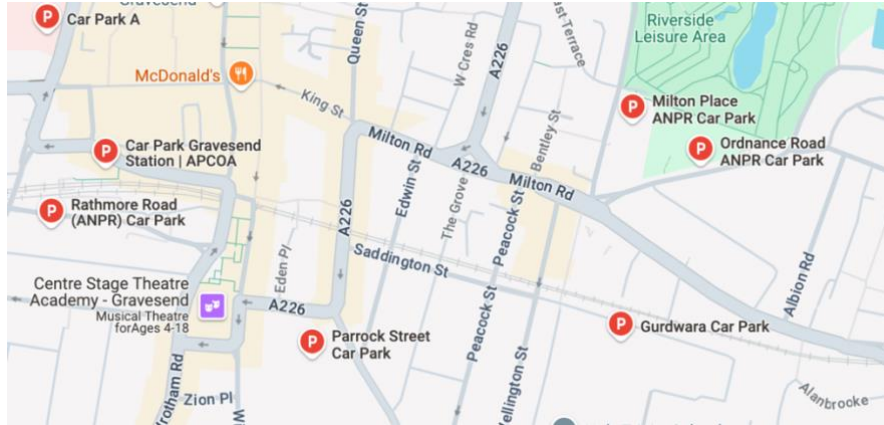
2. Impact on Parking

The proposed conversion of 78 Peacock Street from a Public House to a Mosque is not expected to significantly impact local parking availability. Rather, it is expected that this conversion will actually reduce local traffic and make the area quieter and friendlier as there will be no loud music or potential disruption which can quite often be the result of alcohol consumption. The trustees of the Mosque will strive tirelessly to achieve the following:

- i. Minimise single occupancy car travel to and from the Mosque.
 - ii. Highlight the fact that the Mosque is designed to be attractive to local (walking distance worshippers) only for 5 daily prayers.
 - iii. Identify which measures are needed to maximise the use of non-car travel.
 - iv. Work to change the travel behaviour of individuals to a sustainable mode of travel and then maintain that change – provide bike racks and electrical charging pods for e-scooters.
- **Current Parking Situation:** The building currently lacks dedicated parking, similar to most neighbouring properties. The surrounding area operates under permit-restricted parking, primarily utilised by residents. Focus will be placed on utilising the two public car parks both of which are within 2-3 minutes walking distance.



- **Natural Deterrents:** Limited available parking and restrictive regulations (time and duration) naturally deter visitors from driving to this area.
- **Religious Practices and Attendance Patterns:** Attendance at Mosques varies depending on individual religious observance. In Gravesham, the majority of worshippers attend weekly, while only a few attends daily prayers. Congregational prayers typically last 5 to 10 minutes, making it impractical to spend significant time seeking parking.
- **Local Resident Focus:** The Mosque will primarily serve local residents within walking distance, thus minimizing the need for additional parking. This also helps reduce environmental impact and eases the strain on other Mosques in the area.



- The above is a representation of the seven public car parks in a one-mile radius of the location. Visitors have the choice to park at any of these locations and walk to our premises. In our commitment to sustainable practices, we will urge all of our visitors to use sustainable resources to come to our centre, which includes walking as much as possible to reduce their carbon footprint.

3. Parking Management Strategy

To ensure minimal disruption to local parking, Al-Haqq Academy will implement the following strategies:

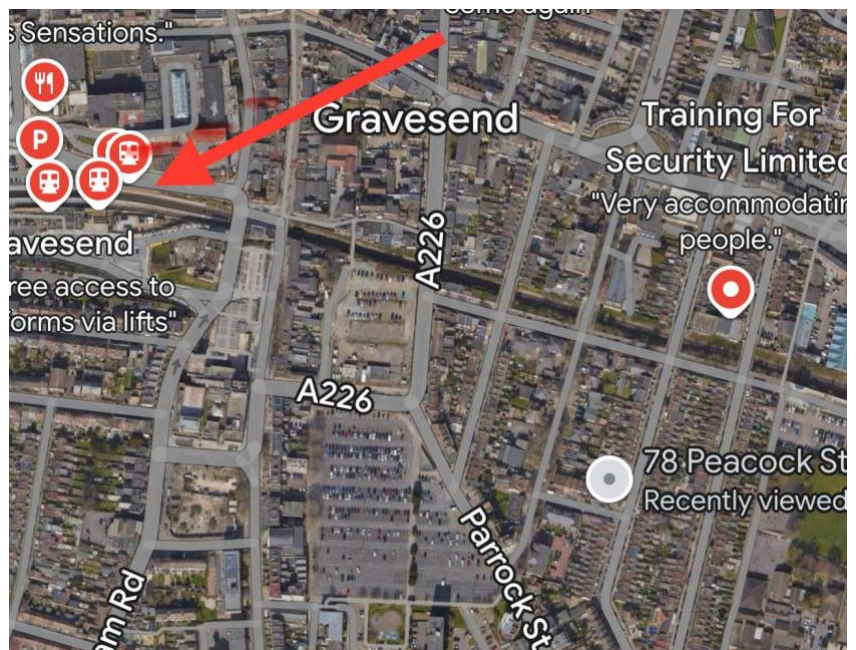
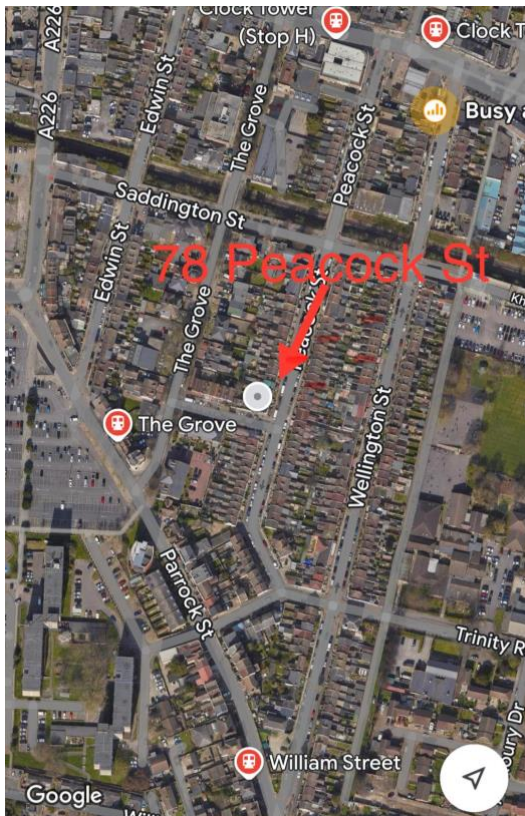
- **Promotion of Walking and Use of Public Transport:** Religious leaders will regularly encourage walking and using public transport, emphasising environmental stewardship and community responsibility. We will provide notice boards inside the Mosque to highlight all bicycle routes, walking paths etc.
- **Monitoring:** The Travel Coordinator and their team of dedicated volunteers will monitor parking behaviour during peak times, ensuring compliance with local regulations and addressing any non-compliant or anti-social behaviour.
- **Coordination with Authorities:** The Mosque will maintain ongoing communication with local authorities to address any parking issues promptly, including providing evidence of violations and requesting increased patrolling by traffic wardens.
- **Community Engagement:** Regular feedback sessions with local residents will be conducted to identify and resolve any concerns, fostering good relations with the neighbourhood.
- **Communications:** We intend to send out regular communications to benefit the local community which will educate both Muslim and non-Muslims about our centre and the activities we run. In this, we plan to include travel advice to coordinate attendees and provide options for the ease of access of all of our beneficiaries.

- Our primary objective is to promote all eco-friendly alternative to vehicular usage, namely walking and cycling. We will have regular messages sent out which highlight the environmental and health benefits, as well as the significant financial benefits of cycling and walking instead of driving. Al-Haqq Academy are in talks with local bike repair shops and retailers to promote eager bikers, young or old to adopt cycling.

4. Encouraging Public Transport and Alternative Parking

Al-Haqq Academy will actively promote the use of public transport and nearby public car parks to reduce on-street parking usage:

- **Public Transport Information:** Information on local bus routes, schedules, and nearby train stations will be made readily available to attendees through the mosque's website, noticeboards, and social media channels.



- **Carpooling Initiatives:** Encouragement of carpooling among attendees will be promoted, especially for events expected to draw larger crowds.

A significant factor in the strategy is public transportation integration, working with local transit providers to ensure that transportation routes and schedules align with certain times of the month which are busier than others, namely

Friday prayers. However we plan to stagger our Friday prayers thereby reducing peak traffic.

5. Attendee Proximity and Expected Modes of Transport

It is anticipated that most Mosque attendees will be local residents:

- **Local Community Focus:** The mosque aims to serve the immediate community. Most attendees are expected to come from nearby streets, reducing the likelihood of driving.
- **Demographic Data:** Analysis of our support base shows that a significant number of petition signers reside within walking distance, underscoring the local nature of our congregation.
- **Integrated with Town Activities:** Many attendees who come to the mosque may already be in the town centre for shopping or other business activities, thus utilising existing parking arrangements rather than additional on-street parking.

6. Measures to Promote Sustainable Transportation

Al-Haqq Academy is committed to promoting sustainable transportation options:

- **Encouragement of Non-Vehicular Travel:** Regular sermons will emphasize the benefits of walking and cycling, not only as healthier lifestyle choices but also as environmentally friendly options.
- **Future Transport Solutions:** We are investigating the feasibility of a community shuttle service to transport attendees from their homes to the mosque, particularly for those with mobility issues or during special events.
- **Bicycle Parking Facilities:** Installation of bicycle racks to encourage cycling among attendees.

7. Relieving Pressure on Existing Mosques: Analysis and Data

The establishment of Al-Haqq Academy is intended to alleviate congestion at the two existing Mosques in Gravesham:

- **Current Situation:** Both Mosques experience significant congestion, particularly on Fridays and during religious events, due to limited capacity and parking.

- **Community Growth:** With the growing Muslim population in the borough, there is a clear need for additional facilities to distribute the congregational load more evenly.
- **Data on Existing Usage:** Recent data collected from both Mosques indicate peak attendance figures often exceeding capacity, leading to overflow into local streets and parking areas. A new Mosque in the area will provide an alternative for worshippers, reducing the concentration at the existing sites.
- **Projected Impact:** By serving the local community, Al-Haqq Academy will attract residents who would otherwise travel to the other Mosques, thereby reducing vehicle traffic and parking demand in those areas.

GDMA Albion Terrace Car Park Usage (26/08/2024 to 01/09/2024)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5am	2	3	2	3	5	5	4
6am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11am	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1pm	7	8	5	4	FULL	9	8
2pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6pm	5	7	6	7	7	3	4
7pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8pm	6	7	7	5	FULL	9	8
9pm	7	6	5	8	9	8	7
10pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Strains on current local mosques and residential areas:

The images below clearly illustrate how the other two Mosques/Islamic Centres in Gravesham are both under pressure and unable to cope with the growing Muslim population. With the emergence of an increase in the local Muslim community, the Muslim population of Gravesham and particularly the town centre area, it is extremely beneficial to have a suitable alternative for local Muslims that removes the need for them to drive to these two venues.





GDMA – Albion Terrace





St Hildas Way – Shahjalal Centre